

Christian ;

Pursuing the Designs of
Holiness and Happiness,
 In Ordering,

First his own HEART and LIFE, and then
 his F A M I L Y.

With further Directions upon the
Great Points,
 Of Spending our Time, & of Minding our End,
 A N D

Of Behaving our selves well under all
 our T R Y A L S.

A Treatise that may be of use, to persons
 of all Conditions, and Especially to be
 Read in F A M I L I E S.

Hoc est Retia Salutis paudere.

To be Sold by *Nicholas Boone*, at his Shop,
 over against the Old Meeting-house
 in *Boston*. 1700.



THE
GOOD MANS RESOLUTION:

Josh. 24. 15.

*But as for MEE and MY HOUSE we will
serve the Lord.*

SECT. I.

NEVER was there in this world a People more obliged or encouraged unto the Service of the Great God, than we the *New-English Israel* are. The God of Heaven is *Our God*, and it becomes us to Fear Him; *our Fathers God*, and how much ought we to worship Him? To serve God was the very Errand which we were brought into this Wilderness upon; and has hitherto been both our *Glory* & our *Defence*. That we now grow so dull and cold in this, we may write an *Ichabod* upon all our enjoyments, and therein see our *Chariots*

and our *Horse-men* gone. To Revive the *Decay'd Service* of God among us, would be to reduce us into that Favour and Friendship of him who was *The Hope of our Fathers*, which would make us happy enough to refute all the *Lies* of our Enemies. Thus would God the Lord speak peace unto us. Thus would Salvation be nigh to us, and Glory dwell in our Land.

SECT. II.

TO do more, and gain more Service for our God, the Text now before us is to be Discoursed on.

These words are among the last words of *Joshua*, the servant of the Lord; they are a Devout and a Divine sentence uttered by the renowned *Joshua* in a Speech to The Parliament of Israel. The Dying Words of all Great and Good men, have usually been esteemed Remarkable by the Survivers; and those books which contain *Apostrophegmata morientium* have been reckoned perhaps among the most useful in the world. Tho the Dying Songs of *Swans* have not been such things as the *Vulgar Error* has reputed them; yet the Dying Words of *Saints* have afforded a fit Moral for the Fable. The Speech of a Dying Saint has as deep a savour of Heaven, as the Breath of a dying man has of Earth. But methinks, the Dying Words of a *Joshua* should be peculiar Oracles: peruse them, and you will find them so. He had been first, the Lord-General of *Israel's Army*; and was

was now the Lord Protector of Israels Common-Wealth. In this Capacity, a few months before he dy'd, he issued out orders for a Convention of States, to meet at Shechem, a place about forty miles from his own Abode. The Senate, the Judges, & the Officers, and all the Representatives of the people being assembled, before the Tabernacle, which on this extraordinary occasion was removed hither, this famous Prince endeavours to settle & confirm them in the Service of the living God. It is likely he feared a secret Retaining of Idolatry among many, while he was yet alive; but it is certain, he fore-saw an open Defection to Idolatry hastening upon them, when he should be dead and gone. Wherefore, he laies in against it, by a most powerful and pathetic Speech, which has in it,

First, An History of *Memorable Providences* wherein they had experienced the matchless Kindness of God unto them.

Secondly, An Inference from this History, which is expressed in two things.

First, A Counsil, He concludes, *Now therefore fear the Lord and serve Him. Therefore! Wherefore?* Why, inasmuch as you find the Lord so bountiful, that you cannot possibly *Attend* your selves if you leave Him, or *excuse* your selves if you grieve Him. *Therefore* are you to *fear* Him, *serve* Him. Every *Mercy* of God hath a *Threat* in it; it calls for *Grati-*

tude and Obedience. When God has been merciful to us, even *common* Ingenuity, and much more, *holy* Ingenuity will put us upon that Enquiry, *What shall I render to the Lord?* Behold an Answer in this, *Therefore!* We are *Therefore* to *fear the Lord and serve him*; we are *Therefore* to put away all our *Idols*, all our *Follies* for ever more.

Secondly, *A Copy*. He gives them a *Precedent*, an *Example*, to induce them hereto. The Pattern of a *considerable* person, has no *inconsiderable* Influence upon the Observers of it. Such an one does good or ill, even like a *Briareus*, with an *Hundred Hands*. An *Hundred*, & an *Hundred* more will do like *Him*. If he be *wicked*, he does according to the Language of *Satan*, *Speak with his Feet*. If he be *Godly*, he is, according to the Character of *John*, a *Spice*. Such an One most effectually bespeaks all about him, as *Gideon* did once, *Do what you see me to do*.

Thus *Joshua* enforces his *farewel Exhortation* here; saith he, *Be it known to you, that I and my house will serve the Lord*; I was once your *Leader*, pray let me be so still. As I leadd you into the *Canaan* of the Lord, let me have so much credit with you, as also to lead you unto the *Service* of the Lord. Be assured, I shall be a *Witness* against you another day, if you do not now receive me as a *Copy* for you.

Resolution.

You have here *Joshua's Resolution*; and it was founded upon such *moral Reasons*, that we may take it as *Written for the Admonition of us all*. Wherefore this is the *Doctrine*, which I would demand your Attention to.

DOCT.

Every man should engage both **HIMSELF** and **HIS HOUSE** in the *Service of the Almighty GOD*.

SECT. III.

WE have diverse *Propositions* now before us, to discourse upon. The First of them is this.

PROP. 1.

The whole *Duty* of man, is contained in the true *Service* of God. Both in the *First Covenant*, and in the *New Covenant* which God has made with man, there is a *Duty* which man must pay to God. In the *First Covenant* this *Duty* was to be paid in a way of *meritorious Obedience*; in the *New Covenant*, this *Duty* is to be paid in a way of *ingenuous Gratitude*. But the *Service* of God, this ever comprizes all our *Duty* in it. It is the same that the *Wise man* refers unto, in *Eccl. 12. 13.* *Fear God and keep His commandments*; for this is the whole *duty of man*. There are diverse comprehensive and synonymous *Terms*, by which our *Duty to God* is expressed in the *Scripture of Truth*. Our

A 3

Duty

Duty is called *A Serving of God*, as it refers to the *Acts* of our lives in which; but its also called *A Fearing of God*, and *A Loving of God*, as it refers to the *Frames* of our hearts, with which we are to do it. It is called, *A Knowing of God*, as it refers to the principle of it; it is likewise a *Living to Him*, and *Walking with Him*, on the same accounts that it is a *Serving of Him*.

The *Service of God* notes two things, which are to accompany our whole *Duty to him*.

It notes, first, the *Homage* therein done to our God. The *Service of God* is His *Worship*, His *natural* *Worship*, and His *appointed* *Worship*. Hence the *Septuagint* so translate our Text, *I and my house will worship the Lord*. We *serve* God, when we render to him his *Natural* *Worship*. So is intimated in *Deut. 10. 12. Fear the Lord thy God, walk in His waies, love him, & serve the Lord thy God with all thy Heart*. When we *hope* in God, when we *call* on God, when we *cleave* to God, then we *serve* Him. And we *serve* God when we render to Him his *appointed* *Worship*. This was intended in *Exod. 8. 1. Let my people go, that they may serve me*. We *serve* Him when we *observe* the *Ordinances of God*, when we *adore* him according to the *Rules of His Word* in His *House*, and wait upon him in the use of his blessed and sacred *Instructions*.

It, Secondly, notes the *Honour* therein brought

To our God. Service is perform'd to God, when Glory is procur'd for Him. His *Essential* Glory we can by no means advance, we may His *de-clarative*: and therein we serve the Lord. 'Tis a passage in *Isa. 43. 10.* *Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant.* Our Testimonies to God's *Excellencies* are the things by which we serve Him. We serve God, when we acknowledge Him as our *Best Good*, and our *last End*, and our *Omnipresent Judge*. We serve him when we think and speak well of him our selves, and obtain many others to do so too. A Witness for God is a Service to him.

S E C T. IV.

THIS being thus explained, I pass on to a Second Proposition.

P R O P. II.

Every man should engage HIMSELF in the Service of the Almighty God.

The purpose and study of every man should be this, *I will serve the Lord.* We should all be able truly to say of God, as in *Act. 27. 23.* *His I am, and Him I serve.* A *Servant of God*, this was the Title, not of *Joshua* alone, but of other *Worthies* too; when *Abraham* is mentioned, it is, *Abraham the Servant of the Lord.* When *Moses* is mentioned, it is, *Moses the Servant of the Lord.* When God speaks of *Job*, he says,

Job

The Good Man's

Job my Servant. Thus was *Jonah*, thus was *Elijah*, thus was *Zerubbabel* also styled. And it is a style which *We*, too should be ambitious of. If we would not be miserable for ever, we must be the mystical, the *Spiritual* seed of *Israel*; but such are so saluted in *1 Chron. 16. 13. O ye seed of Israel his Servant.* As our *Fathers Friend*, so our *Fathers Lord*, we must not forsake. We must all be the *Servants* of *God*, as our *Father* before us was. And this especially for the three ensuing causes.

REASON I.

We are to serve *God*, because *God* hath *Made* us. The Argument with which *Paul* perswaded *Philemon* to receive a *Run-away Servant* of his own, was that in *Phil. 1. 15. Thou owest unto me even thine own self.* By that Argument should each one of us be perswaded to become a *Dutiful Servant* of the *Lord*, We owe unto him even our own selves. Man! 'tis a most fit thing that thy *Maker* should be thy *Master*.

There are two Questions which I hope every Child within these Walls can give some right Answer to. The Answer to them will render it unquestionable, That you and I are to Serve *God* for ever.

One Question is, *By whom were you made?*

We have an Answer to this, in *Psal. 100. 3. Know ye, that the Lord, he is God, and it is He*

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that has made us, and not we our selves. Thus did the Psalmist once argue, O come, let us worship before the Lord our maker. Why? If he be our Maker, He is, to be the Object of our Service. And this the rather, because of another Question, which is, For What were you made? We have an Answer to this in Isa. 43. 21, This people have I formed for my Self, they shall shew forth my praise. When we praise God, we serve God. Why, This is the very business which we were sent into the world upon. We had never appeared in the Rank of Actual Beings, if God had not propounded some Service to be done unto himself, by creatures of our shape and mould. We are Created by God and Endowed by him. What could it be for, but this? That God may have some service from us. Tis said in *Job*. 17. 28. In him we live and move and have our being. Most absurd shall we be, if it be not for Him too.

REASON. II.

We are to serve God, because Christ has bought us. Indeed, the *Arminian universal Redemption* we reject with a just abhorrence. The Satisfaction of our Lord-Redeemer, was not Intended by Him, for the Redemption of all mankind; nor was it Intended any further than his Intercession is, which reaches only to the Elect of God. The Virtue and Success of our hearts death depends not wholly on something

to be done by men which God is not the Doer of; otherwise, men would themselves be the *Principals* in procuring their own Salvation. But one scope of our Lord's Death was even to purchase for us, that *Grace*, that *Faith*, that *Free Will*, which may qualify us to enjoy the *Virtue* and *Success* of it. Certainly *Peter* was more beholden unto the Merit of Christ for his *Redemption*, than *Judas* was for his. Yet the *Purchase* of Christ wonderfully binds us all to the *Service* of God.

For *First*, the *Redemption* of Christ has made our *Serving* of God, a possible thing. Had it not been for this, poor fallen undone man had never been in a Capacity to serve the Lord. We had never heard this Call from heaven, *O Repent, Return, Reform!* this voice from on high, *O save your selves now to the serving of that God, whom you have been sinning against*; it had never sounded in our Ears, if the Lord Jesus had not made Himself a Sacrifice. We must have continued the *Slaves* of the devil for ever, if the *Stings* of the Dragon had not fastned on the Lord. The Lord Jesus has bought us all into such a Condition, that the Proffers and the Tenders of the Gospel might be made unto us. We are told of some in 2. Pet. 2. 1. *Who Deny the Lord that bought them.* O vile Sacrilege and Impiety! That we might all have the privilege of an Invitation to the Service of God, this has

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cost no less than the *Heart-bloud* of Christ; and what a monstrous villany were it for us now to despise the Invitation? *Again,*

The *Redemption* of Christ has made our *Serving* of God, a *Reasonable* thing. We are all among the Redeemed, either in Reality, or at least in Possession, all the *Chosen* and *Called* of God, are most really interested in the Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus; and therefore, for them to decline the *Service* of God, were as *unequal* as it is *unlikely*. But every one of us is at least *professedly* interested in it. Man, art thou willing to quit all claim unto the Death and Blood of the Lord Jesus? O No, not for ten thousand worlds. Every one saies, *I hope I am Redeemed!* Well then, The *Service* of God is that which we must count our selves Redeem'd unto. What saies the Apostle, in 1. Cor. 6. 20 *Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorifie God.* We that have been the *Captives* of the mighty and the prey of the terrible, apprehend our selves to be set at Liberty from their horrible Tyrannies, by the *Suffering* of Christ; What less than the *Service* of God, are we thereby obliged unto? In a word, We are the *Bought servants* of God; and wo to us if our Behaviours be not agreeable to our Obligations.

REASON III.

The Lords daily Mercy to us, requires our hearty Service to Him. It is noted of the rudest among the Gentiles, in Lev. 23. 25. Their Benefactors exercise a Lordship over them. Never, Never had we any Benefactor like to our God, who daily loads us with his Benefits. Unthankful wretches are we, if we shake off the Lordship of such a Lord. It was an Address once made to a Governour in Act. 24. 2. By the we enjoy great quietness, and very worthy deeds are done unto us by thy providence. It were a disloyal, an unworthy thing, not to serve such a Governour. Truly, From God we enjoy great quietness; by the Providence of God, we are delivered from a Thousand perils every day; and we are surrounded with ten thousand Comforts Every day; by the Providence of God we are directed, protected, sustained and supplied, every day. This calls for the Service of God at our hands. Tis said, in Rom. 12. 1. I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice unto Him. What a persuasive piece of Oratory is that? I beseech you by the Mercies of God. He that urges you to the Service of God may thus plead with you, I beseech you, Brethren, by the Mercies of God, that God may not have one servant in the world the less for you. I beseech you, Brethren, that when the Word rests, and mercy of God is following of you, you do not

not turn your backs on the Service of God. To pursue this Argument; I beseech you Brethren, Whose Light is it, whereby you are every day revived? It is God's. Whose Air is it, whereby you are every day refreshed? It is God's. Whose Fire is it, that warms you? Whose Meat is it that feeds you? Whose Raiment is it that covers you? All is God's. O then, Serve Him. These are the Cords of a man, with which we are bound to the Service of our Lord. This is the Poësie which God has inscribed in the Ring of every mercy; O learn to serve the Giver of this! It was a sad Complaint which the Lord made in Isa. 1. 2. I have nourished them, and brought them up, yet have they rebelled against me. Alas, what a YET is there? Our God has been as a Father to us; and yet shall not we Serve Him as our Master? He Relieves us, He Supports us, He Bestowes on us the mercies of Children, and shall not we yet return so much as the Respects of Servants unto Him? The Heavens will hear and be amazed, the Earth will give ear and be astonish'd, at a thing so much exceeding Brutality it self, as this.

S E C T. V.

BUT we are not to be Alone in the Service of God: Man is a sociable Creature; & as he does need, so he must help Humane Society, in this Grand concern. Wherefore we have a Third

Proposition yet to be reflected on.

PROP. III.

Every man should engage HIS HOUSE also in the *Service* of the Almighty God. We are all related unto some *House* or other. Sometimes a *Nation* is called by that name. So tis said in Exek. 3. 1. *Speak to the House of Israel.* And thus, every man should labour to promote the *Service* of God in the *Nation* which he belongs unto. All that can be properly done by him for his *Nation*, in his *Station* to set up and bring in the *Service* of God, so much every man is to do, if ever he would give a good Account of his *Talents*, in the Day of God's appearing. But most usually, a *Family* is called by this Name; and so it is in the Text now before us. Tis a *Metonymie*; the *House* is put for them who dwell in the house. Those who cohabit in the *same house* are to endeavour that the *same God* may be served by all under the Roof. And this is incumbent especially on the *Superiors* in the House. All that are *About* us, but chiefly all that are *Under* us, are by us to be drawn or driven to the *Service* of God. The *Master* of the *Family* is to see unto it, that every one under his Charge become the *Servant* of the Lord. And this because of such things as these.

REASON. I.

We should engage our *Houses* to the *Service* of God, out of *Respect* to God Himself. To the

Honſchold

Householder it may well be said, For God's sake look after thy House; For God's sake, Let there be God's service in it. To speak particularly,

First, The Commandment of God calls for it. We have this Commandment often repeated unto us, That we should be careful about the Instruction and Conversion of them that we are charged with. Tis a Commandment inculcated in the Old Testament. We have in Deut. 6. 6, 7. The words which I command thee, thou shalt diligently teach them unto thy Children. We have it again, in Psal. 78. 57. He commanded our fathers, that they should make known unto their Children, that these might set their hope in God, and keep his Commandments. We have it once more in Deut. 4. 9, 10. Gather the people, that they may learn to fear me, and that they may teach their Children. Tis a Commandment not unmentioned in the New Testament also. We find in Eph. 6. 4. Ye Fathers, bring up your Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord. Behold, How many solemn Charges are laid upon us to do our part, that God may be served by all that are under our Inspection. God does Command us, to command them, thereabout.

Secondly. The Interest of God calls for it. Our Lord said unto a Peter, in Joh. 21. 15. Lovest thou me? --- Then Feed my Lambs. The like may be said unto a Master, If thou dost love God, then bring thy lambs to serve Him.

To propagate Religion is to magnify and glorify the Lord. It is said in Prov. 14. 28. *In the multitude of people is the Kings honour* : as tis said of an earthly, so may it be said of the Heavenly King. Now if we cause our Houses to serve God in Conjunction with our selves, hereby we propagate Religion ; yea, to many generations. I remember, Solomon assigns this as one Cause, why he did well educate his own Children ; twas because his father had so dealt with him ; Saith he in Prov. 4. begin. *Hear ye children the instruction of a father ; for I was my father's son, and he taught me.* Let us fix our children in the Service of God, and they will afterwards do so by theirs. Thus the Lord will alwayes have a seed to serve him, which Will be accounted for a generation. Our Children, did I say ? yea, our Servants too, may in like manner carry on a Succession of Service to the Lord. It was the Commendation of Solomon, in 1. King. 10. 8. *Happy are these thy servants, which bear thy wisdom.* How many ages after, we find the posterity of them Servants, retaining a favour of Devotion and Affection to the House of God.

REASON II.

We should engage our Houses to the Service of God, out of Respect to our Houses too. The said *A righteous man regards the life of his beast.* How much more will a righteous man regard the

State of his House? We have two things also to be particularized here.

First, our Houses are miserable thro' us, if they do not serve God. It is hinted as a most extraordinary misery upon any person, in Prov. 51. 35. *We shall say without instruction.* Fearful and awful will be the case of those in our Houses, whom our Instruction shall not endear the Service of God unto. Our Houses are starving, while our God is not serving in them. The Prophet said in Lam. 2. 11. *Mine eyes do fail with tears; because the children swoon in the streets of the city: they say to their mothers, where is the comfort? O doleful spectacle!* But while our Children are strangers to God, there is a worse Famine in our Houses; we suffer their Souls to pine and perish without the Bread of life. Yea, our Houses are Burning while our God is not serving in them. What a terrible desolation was there on Sodom! in allusion to which, it is said of a wicked man, in Job. 18. 15. *Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.* Why, there is a dreadful storm of ardent Brimstone, ready to fall upon those Houses, where the Children are not bringing up for God; the Wrath of God, like an horrible Tempest of burning Brimstone is impending over them. What shall I say more? Our poor Children are enslaved unto Satan, until they come to be serving of God. If a Devil had a Bodily Possession of our Children, how impatient

impatient should we be to see them delivered? We should cry out like the Woman of Canaan, in *Matth. 15. 22.* *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, my child is grievously vexed with a devil.* But know, the Devil has a spiritual Possession of our Children, till they come to serve the Lord; the evil spirit, he takes them, he tears them, and they *fame* and pine, and are thrown into the water, and into the fire. O pittie them; if we are not more stupid than the *Ostrich*, pittie we our forlorn Houses, and let not the Service of God be wanting thro' any fault of ours.

Secondly. We are Accountable for our Houses, if they do not serve God. As the Daughter of Pharaoh said unto the Mother of Moses, in *Exod. 2. 9.* *Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.* Thus does the Lord say unto us; *Take these children, take these young ones, and bring them up to serve me I will reward thee for it.* The Apostle saies, of Ministers, *They watch for souls, as they that must give an account;* so it may be said of all House-keepers, *They must give an account of the souls that belong unto their Families.* Twas confessed by the Prophet in the Parable, *1. King. 20. 39.* *Behold a man turned aside, and brought a man to me, and said, Keep this man; if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his.* This, This is a thing certainly to come to pass in the dreadful Day of God. Man, Thy life shall be for his life, who did

not serve God, because thou didst not teach him, and Thy soul shall be for his soul, who is lost for ever, because thou didst not look after him. Jacob could say to his Uncle about his Lambs, That which was torn of Beast, of my hands didst thou require it. Behold, thou hast Lambs in thy Fold, Little ones in thy House; God will strain for it, --- it wild beasts, and Lusts carry any of them away from the Service of God through any neglect of thine, thou shalt smart for it in the fiery prison of God's terrible Indignation. Wherefore, as Paul saies, O keep, for I say, O Save, that which is committed unto thy trust.

S E C T. V I.

IT is now Time that we make a due Application of these Faithful Sayings And there is a double Exhortation which I have to manage.

The First Exhortation, is,

Let us all Resolve to engage OUR SELVES in the Service of God.

To Quicken you to it;

Consider seriously, Who your Fellow-servants are, when once you serve the Almighty God. O come in, and serve God, for shame; lest in the whole world, you have none but Devils to bear you company: And will you be of their side, of their sort? Rebellion truly is as the sin of Witchcraft, for this peice of Madnes in it. All other Beings make a Surrender of themselves unto

into the *Service* of God ; and it is said of them
 in Psal. 119. 91. *All are thy Servants.* O
 do not you stand out. Harken, ye immor-
 tal souls ; You have the call of *Christians* to en-
 tice you into this happy *Service*. All the Emi-
 nent Believers of the By-past-Ages, the men, of
 whom the world was not worthy, all these do with
 one voice, and a loud one, urge this upon you ;
Come and serve our God, as we have done before
you. Even James himself, the Kinsman of the
 Lord is ambitious rather of this Denomination
The Servant of the Lord. And puissant Empe-
 rours before now, have gladly espoused, such
 a Title as that, *The Vassals of the Lord.* More
 than this, you have the Call of *Angels* to incite
 you thereunto. Those bright *Morning Stars*
 ask this of you, *Will you come and move in our*
Sphere ? They all are the servants of the Lord,
 and they do his pleasure. At his Beck they clap
 their silver wings, and they do his Commandments.
 An Angel said once to John the Apostle, *I am*
thy Fellow-Servant. That Angel is yet alive ; &
 He makes the motion to every one of us, *Wilt*
thou be my Fellow-Servant before the Lord ? Yea,
 the SON of GOD Himself gives you this
 Call. Of Him saith our God, in Isa; 42. 1.
Behold my Servant ! Shall God say thus of
Christ ? and shall He not say it of thee ? O
 do not scorn to be the Servant of that GOD,
 who has for a Servant, Him whom all the Third
 Heaven

Heaven is with endless Raptures adoring of.

Consider, yet again, What your Service is, while you serve the Almighty God. No Service was ever so delightful as this? tis, *All peace, and perfect peace.* No Service was ever so profitable; it brings in those things, *The gain whereof is better than fine Gold*; you shall be sure to experiment the Truth of that Maxim, *God is a Rewarder.* No Service was ever so Honourable. It prefers us to be *Favourites* of a greater Monarch than he that had an hundred and seven and Twenty Provinces under him. A Service do we count it? No, tis a *Freedom*. We are *Lords*, when we are *The Lord's*; Then, as he said, *sumus Domini*, is true, not only in *Genitivo singulari*, but in *Nominativo plurali*. It is a *Freedom*, *Yea*, tis a *Kingdom*. It gives us to sing, *Lord, Thou hast made us Kings and Priests.* It has been well said, *Deo servire est regnare.* We have *Crowns* on our heads, all the while we are in the Service of God; but how massy, how weighty will they be grown when our *Pay-day* comes! — Every *Servant* of God may now say, as in 2. *Tim.* 4. 8. *Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.* But Then, Then, we shall ascend those glittering and glorious *Thrones*, which *Eye hath not seen*; on them we shall be ever with the *Lord*.

Consider, finally, (and let me warn you faithfully.) If you do not Resolve to serve God, it had

had been good for you, that you never had been born. All that forsake the Service of God, are employ'd in another Service, which every soul may tremble at the Description of; 'tis a Service to those hellish Tigris in Eph. 22. *The course of this world, the prince of the power of the air, and the lust of the flesh.* You cast off the Service of One; but you incur a Bondage to three: let Horror seize thee, O man, and let thy ears tingle, at the intimations of it. The *World, the Flesh, & the Devil* are thy Lords, if God have not Service from thee. All the Gallies in the *Mediterranean Sea* cannot fliew a more dismal Vassalage! And what will the Issue of that Service be? Truly, *The Wages -- is Death.* God will not save you, if you do not serve Him. You that now grind for the *Philistines* of Hell every day, must one day be requited with only *Coals and Wounds*, for all your fatal Drudgeries; and though you then roar, *Lord, pity me!* He will reply with a furious Rebuke, *Depart, I know you not.*

Let me then address you in the Words of *Joshua*; Choose now, whom you will Serve. Come, speak up; come to some Resolution. Say, Will you serve the cursed and cruel Enemies of your Souls? or will you serve the *G O D* Whom it is good for you to draw near unto? O make this Return, Lord, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.

SECT. VII

SECT. VII.

YOU have been told *Why*; now here *How*;
 you are to become, *The Servants of God*.
 There are diverse *Counsils* to be given hereabout.
 The First COUNSEL.

Renounce and Forsake the Service of those Idols which you have heretofore been enslaved unto. We must, as *Joshua* here assures us, we must put away other gods, if we would serve the Lord. Our Lord has admonished us, in *Matth. 6. 24.* *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* Even so, *Ye cannot serve God and Satan.* And again, *Ye cannot serve God and Sin.* The Holy God may say of you as of *them*, long since, *Ye have served strange gods.* But, O do you now say to *Him*, as *they* in *Isai. 21. 13.* *O Lord, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but we will now, be for Thee alone.* Become weary of your Captivity under those *Task-masters* which have hitherto been torturing your souls. There are two sorts of *Tyrants* that every *unregenerate* man is a *Servant* unto; his *Temper*, and his *Tempters*. Let the *Temper* within us, no more cause us to toil, and run, and sweat, for the gratifying of them. Let the *Tempters* without us, no more hurry us too & fro, that their *Humours* may be pleased: Souls, I give you no *bad counsil*, when I propound this; and I do propound it, O, *Run away from your old masters.* Come away poor souls, come away from the land of your Captivity.
 Look

Look upon the grim face of the Patroons under which you groan; say to them all, Farewell, you malicious, you bloody, you sordid Masters, Farewell; We hope you shall never have any of our Service more. O look upon the Calamities of your Service under your invisible Adversaries, and say, *It is enough!* Say, *The time past may suffice.* Thus, Take ye the *Wings of a Dove*, and flee away.

The Second Counsil.

Bind your selves unto the Service of God by a Covenant never to be Forgotten. It was the good Counsil of Hezekiah, in 2. Chron. 30. *Bind your selves unto the Lord.* In the Hebrew Original tis, *Give the Hand unto the Lord.* The giving of the Hand was a Rite in the making of a Covenant. Men and Brethren, Look towards, I beseech you; and say now, *I will join myself to the Lord in a perpetual COVENANT.* Think on the Service which God is to have of you, and be able then to declare, as in Psalm 119. 1102 *I have sworn it, and I will perform it.* Make a solemn Covenant, that you will be the Lord's. Yea, a Written, a Formal, a subscribed Covenant for it, has by some been advised and practised. Written and Formal indentures are made between man and man; Why should not there be so between God and man? when a Service is to be Entred into. Especially since tis said, in *Isai, 44. 5. A man shall subscribe*

subscribe with his hand unto the Lord ?

In a Sacred Covenant say,

I Renounce all the *Vanities* and *Idols* of this World.

I Engage that I will cleave unto the Lord *Jehovah*, as my *Best Good*, and my *Last End*; promising to live *upon Him*, and *unto Him*, hoping ere long to live *with Him* for ever.

I Engage, That I will cleave unto the Lord *Jesus*, as my *Prophet*, and my *Priest*, and my *King*; Promising to acknowledge Him as the Author of all my Salvation.

I Engage, That I will ever study what is my *Duty* in these things; and wherein I find my self to fall short, I will ever count it my *Grief*, my *Shame*, and for pardon betake my self to the Blood of the *Everlasting Covenant*.

All this I Engage, humbly imploring the *Grace* of the Mediator to be *sufficient* for me.

It would hurt no Godly man, to set his *Name* with Hand and Heart to such an Instrument; afterwards frequently Reflecting on it, frequently Renewing of it. However, let every man this Day, make this Confession, in *Psal. 116. 16.* O Lord, truly I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant.

The Third Rule.

And now demean your selves in all things as the *Servants* of God ought to do.

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There

The Good man

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Resolution.

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There is a Four-fold Concernment that will now lye upon you.

First. Be studious to know what Service God calleth for. Ly at His Feet, and say as Paul of old, Lord, What wouldest thou have me to do? or like Samuel once, Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth. Be daily Reading of the Word, be daily Thinking on the Word: upon every opportunity say, I will hear what God the Lord will say. To all, add That, as your daily Petition unto God, in Psal. 119. 115. I am thy servant, O Lord, give me understanding that I may know thy testimonies.

Secondly, Be ready to Do what Service God calleth for. Never object, never cavil against any of Gods Commands; never dispute any thing that He requires; but own, 'Tis all holy, and just, and Good. Be not more undutiful unto God, than the servants of the Centurion were to him. If He say, Go, then go; if He say Come, then come; if He say, Do this, then do it, without any Grumbling at it. Say not, I won't, altho there be Hard Sayings pressed upon thee. Albeit God may enjoin this, Pluck out thy right eye, cut off thy right hand; and albeit the Injunction of God may be, Take up thy Cross; yet Comply yet, Conform, without any Reluctancies; and say with him in Psal. 119. 128. O Lord, I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things, to be right.

Thirdly. Be greatly Contriving how to

most serviceable unto God. Ponder well, What you are, What you have, What you can; and Ponder how all may be improved in the Service of the Lord. Thus be Zealous of good Works. Never be satisfied unless you can say, *I am at work for God.* Let even your Eating, your Trading, your Visiting, be done as a Service for the Lord; and let your Time, your Strength, your Estates, all the Powers of your Spirits, and all the Members of your bodies, be ingeniously laid out in that Service. Often ask your own souls, *What is there that I may do for God?* Even court, and hunt Advantages to be serviceable; Say like the Prophet, In Isa. 6. 8. Say, Lord, if thou hast any Service to be done, here I am, send me.

Fourthly. Be sweetly Contented with all the Allowances of the Lord. John Baptist gave this Counsel to the servants in the Roman Garrisons, Luc. 3. 14. *Be content with your Wages.* The Servants in God's Household, have the same Counsel, in Heb. 13. 5. *Be content with such things as you have.* Tho you should have but short Commons, and straw lodgings in the world; tho you should be without many Flesh-pleasing Curiosities and Conveniencies, let this quiet you, *I am a Servant.* Don't complain of the Lord, as the slothful and wicked servant once, *He is an hard Master.* Let your Wills be moulded and melted into His; and cheerfully leave Him to judge, What may be Food convenient for you.

Count that you have enough, when God saies, you shall have no more; and alwaies have a good Opinion of Gods Disposals. Learn Pauls Lesson, In whatever state to be content. It is not for Beggars, nor Servants to be Choosers.

This, This tis to be a Servant of the Lord. Blessed is the servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh shall find so doing.

SECT. VIII.

BUT This is not all that we have to do. We have Houses too that we ought to be concerned for. Wherefore,

The Second Exhortation, is

Let us also study to Engage **OUR HOUSES** in the Service of God.

It is the property of every Good man to do his Company in the Service of the Lord. O that we might have the Company of all that belong to our Houses in it! But

What shall we do?

In short, Would we truly say with Joshua, My House shall serve the Lord? We must then Do-like Jesus. Jesus the blessed Name-sake, and Antitype of Joshua, hath a Three-fold Office; that of a Priest, a Prophet, and King. In His lesser Family of Disciples once in His greater Family of Believers alwaies, we find Him so. Every Householder should be of this in his own Family. Each man pretends to be a King in his own house; he should then

be a *Priest*, and a *Prophet* too. There are Three great Cares lying upon us in our *Families*; there is *Family-Prayer*, and *Family-Instruction*, and *Family-Government*. 'Tis by the Discharge of these three things, that we engage our *Houses* to serve the Lord.

Family-PRAYER.

SECT. IX.

First, then. Let *Family-Prayer* be maintained in our *Houses*, that they may serve the Lord. My Neighbours, I have told you often, and I now tell you weeping, That it will be a sad thing, if so much as one *Prayerless-Family* be found among you all. The owners of that House will never be able to stand or live in the fiery day of God's pleading with him. You have been Warned and Warned full many a time, that if your *Houses* be not Warned with your *Prayers*, the fierce Wrath of God abideth on them; and I hope, none of you will venture to meet me at the Bar of the Lord Jesus, with the fearful heavy guilt of this Omission upon your souls. The very *Turks* themselves, at this day uphold a *Family-Worship* among themselves; God forbid that any styled *Christians* here should be worse than they.

SECT. X.

The Method in which I shall treat with you here about, shall be,

I. To offer some Directions about Family-Prayer.

The First Rule.

Let all Persons that should attend *Family-prayer*, count themselves concern'd to *Pray without ceasing*. Every *Master* of an *House*, is to carry on the *Prayer* in it. That man is not fit to have an *House*, that cannot make a *Prayer*. But if the *Master* be *absent*? Then the *Mistress* is to see still that *Prayer* be not wanting. It seems affirmed of *Esther*, a *Woman*, in *Cap. 4. 16*. That she pray'd with her *Maidens*. There should not be one *Prayer* the less in a *Family*, because a *Widow* is become the *Ruler* there: No, the *Losses* of a *Family*, should increase the *Prayers* of it. And let the *Master* of a *Ship*, remember, That the *Sailers* are his *Family*. He should pray with them aboard, every day while they are at *Sea* together. You that see the *Wonders* of *God* together, should together sing the *Praises* of *God*, and together beg the *Mercies* of *God*. Methinks, the poor *Sea-men*, should be the best men in the world. With what face can you pray in a *Storm*, if you do not also pray in a *Calm*? Now *Master*, 'tis your *Work*, 'tis part of your *Orders* from your great *Owner* to see that this be done. Let all *Mariners* call upon their *Master*, as those *Mariners* did upon the *Passenger* in, *Jon. 1. 6*. *Arise, call upon thy God, that we perish not.* Let the *Master* of a *School* also, Remem-

ber, That the Scholars are his *Family*; He should pray with them, and bless them in the Name of the Highest. God provides *Angels*. and will not you afford *Prayers* for the safety of those little ones? We read of some in *Mark*. 10. 13. who brought young children unto the Lord Jesus Christ: The Children that are brought to you, by Parents or Guardians, these are by you to be brought unto the Lord Jesus, that He would lay His Blessing and saving hands upon them. Yea, the Captain of a Train'd Band, is to esteem the Souldiers as his *Family*. That good Captain Cornelius, could say, in *Act*. 10. 30. I prayed in my House. As for those that will not pray in the Field, tis to be questioned, whether they will Fight there. *Trainings* without *Prayings* are like to degenerate into meer *Debaucheries*. The Prayerless Captain gives a very dangerous and desperate Word of Command when he saies, Follow your Leader. Briefly, All Superiors generally have a *Family* in the Kind of their Superiority, which they are to attend *Prayers* withal.

The Second Rule.

Let all the *Manners* that would hinder *Family-Prayer* be put far from our *Tabernacles*. There are diverse *Impediments* of our family-*Prayers*, which we are to be Cautioned against. As our Let not family-*Farrs* hinder family-*Prayers*. The Apostle saith to them that are in a *Conjugal* State

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lation, that they should be meek, tender, loving; for this cause in 1. Pet. 3. 7. *That your Prayers be not hindered.* If Peace be gone from a family, then Prayer is gone. How can Scolding, and it may be Striking too, agree with Praying, in which we are to *lift up pure hands, without wrath?* Again, Let not family-Scabs hinder family-Prayers. *Bad-Members* in a family, often cause that there are *no Prayers* in it. Many men will not pray, because others will *scoff and flout.* But let your Houses have no such *In-mates*, no such *Ishmaels* in them. It is recorded of *Elisha*, in 2. King. 4. 33. he would not have a *servant* with him, which he could not pray withal. If any profane, graceless, Despisers of Prayer, would impose themselves upon us, let us then say to them, *Depart ye workers of iniquity. for I will call upon the Lord.* Once more,

Let not *Family-Prayers* be hindered by *unsuitable Times.* The earlier we dispatch them, the easier. We should not ordinarily let *Business* royl us in the Morning, nor *Drowsiness* drown us in the Evening, before *Family Prayer* be over. As To every purpose, thus to every Prayer there is a time and judgment; and a wise mans heart will discern

The Third Rule.

Be frequent enough, and yet very serious in your family-Prayers. Very shameful is their neglect, who have Prayers in their Families but once a day.

day. The Apostle saith in Col. 4. 2. *Masters, continue in prayer*; he speaks with a manifest Allusion to the *daily Offering* under the Law of old; which was both *morning* and *evening*. We should have *Morning-Prayers*, and *Evening-Prayers*, correspondent unto the *daily Sacrifice*. And hence, because the Sacrifice was doubled on the *Sabbath*, I have known some pious people, pray *four times every Lords-Day* with their *Families*. Be sure, *Twice a day* is ordinarily the seldomest and slenderest Repetition that our Family-prayers are to have.

O but we should therein *stir up our selves to take hold on God*. When you kneel before the Lord, you should not be rash, hasty, sudden in it; you should not be *sleighty* in this great Exercise of Religion. Before we pray, we should think, *Think seriously, To WHOM am I to pray? and For What am I to Pray? and How soon may I dye, and my praying seasons all be over?* And before we pray, we should Read. Read seriously something of the *Things which are commanded you of God*. The *Scriptures* are to accompany our prayers. Tis said, *They are to dwell with us*. The *Bible* is to be one of the *House*. When we betake our selves to our Prayers, we should not let the Bible say, *I should have been as one of the Family; pray, why was not I called in?*

The Fourth Rule.

Let not your *Family-prayers* be your only prayers.

prayers. Understand, that *Secret Prayers*, as well as *private Prayers*, are to be performed by us all. For this, the word of our Lord is very positive, in *Math. 6. 6.* *When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.* This is a great fondness and folly in any of us, if *private prayer* cause us to lay aside *secret prayer*. No, There is *Closet-Prayer* as well as *Parlour-Prayer* which we ought to labour in. I would say, as our Lord in another case, *One you ought to do; & not leave the other undone.* We have *special Transgressions* to be confessed in our prayers; these are *secretly* to be confessed. To divulge a *secret sin*, is to add a *further sin*. Our *secret sins*, do call for our *secret Prayers*. We have *special Temptations* to be bewailed in our prayers; and these are *secretly* to be bewailed. Our *Desires* are sometimes to be too *secret* for our Neighbours. Our *secret Grievances* and our *secret Fears* call for our *secret Prayers*. And as one of the Ancients elegantly expresses it, *Invisible prayers are to be often made to an invisible God.* *Secret prayer* is one good sign of a *gracious heart*. Let the Lord oft see you like *Nathanael* at *secret prayer* under the *Fig-tree*, and He will say, *Behold an Israelite indeed!* Would you get *Internal Blessings*? then pray in *secret*. *Solomon* got his *Wisdom*, his *Virtue*, by *secret prayer*. *Peter* by *secret prayer* in a *Balconie*, was carried with *Trances* and *Raptures*.

tures into the other world. Would you get External Blessings? Then pray in secret. *Hannah* with secret prayer asked one Son, and had six. *Jacob* had all his House preserved by secret prayer. Yea, Would you Be General Blessings? Pray then in secret. *Moses* by secret prayer diverted wrath & plagues from all the Congregation. That infamous Apostate *Julian*, was killed by the secret prayer of a good man, at that hour very far distant from him. What shall I say? No Superstitions, no Diversion should ever be given to your secret prayers.

Moreover, besides your Prayers with all the Family, you may do well sometimes to Retire unto prayers with this or that particular person in it. Some do so translate that passage in *Gen.* 28. 21. *Isaac entreated the Lord with his wife.* It were but a discreet and a decent practice, for married persons to do likewise. Thus, holy Parents, have often taken their Children, one by one alone; and there pray'd and wept, and pour'd out their souls, over the poor lambs in secret places before the Lord. Thus are we to do, Thus to pray.

S E C T. XI.

But the Sluggard will pretend, *A Lion in the way.* Wherefore I pass on,

II. To Remove some Objections against Family-Prayer.

A Threefold Want is pleaded by many, to excuse

24 *The good man's*
cuse their *Prayerless* Conversation with ;
Want of *Time*, a Want of *Confidence*, and a
Want of *Utterance*.

The First Excuse.

One man doth so Excuse himself. *I want Time for Family-prayer ; especially in a Morning, I can't spare the Time.*

This is a most horrid and wicked Excuse. Thou Madman, *From Whom* hast thou all thy *Time* ? All thy *Time* is given by God, and shall *None* of thy *Time* be given to God ? What, *No Time* to pray with thy Family ? God knowes thou canst find *time* to eat with thy family, *time* to sleep with thy family, perhaps, *time* to smoke with thy family ; and no *Time* to pray with 'em ?

Once more,
What is it that does engross thy *Time*, and put by thy *Prayer* ? Tis the *World*, the *World* ! And is *that* such a Portion indeed, as to bespeak thy Contempt of an Eternal *G O D*, and of an immortal *Soul*, in the pursuance of it ? Thou shalt quickly take an everlasting *Farewel* of all this *World* ; *This World* will not stand thee in any stead ere long, when thy *Soul*, thy *Soul* shall be trembling on thy cold lips, just ready (as the *Atheist* said) to *Take a great leap in the Dark*. Yea, That very *Day*, wherein thou goest abroad without thy *Family Prayers*, may prove the

the very Day, wherein an Angry God may say, *This day shall thy soul be required of thee.* And what a phrensy is this? To be extreme busy & earnest about the trifles of *this* world, while a precious never-dying *soul* is unprovided for? I wish that all *Prayerless Houses*, had this Admonition engraved on their walls, *What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* Could you see it engraved on those walls, with an Hand writing, like what *Belshazzar* saw of old, it would no doubt amaze and startle you. Look into these leaves, and see it with a sharp *Styl*e engraven here! Besides. *Family Prayers* are no real prejudice to *Sacular Affairs*. They should not be Long, Tedious, Burdensome; and they'll *hinder no Journey*, no concern; all will prosper the better for them. In short, God will find an *Eternity* to *Damn* the man that cannot find a *Time to Pray*.

The Second Excuse.

Another man doth so excuse himself, *I want Confidence for Family prayer; I would pray, but I am Asham'd.*

This Excuse is little beter. To be ashamed of *Prayer* is to be ashamed of *Christ*. And it is the plain Word of our Lord *JESUS* in

Marc

Marc. 8. 38. *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me of him, also shall the Son of man be ashamed.* O direful Doom! Will not such a smart Thunder clap, cause thee and thy Family to fall down upon their knees? Never be 'asham'd of Prayer, but be 'asham'd of sin; 'tis a sin to live without prayer. If you have any Scoffers in your Houses, whom 'tis not fit you should pray before, then do as Abraham did; e'en, Turn 'em out of the doors. Better Turn them out, than Turn God out. They that use not Family-prayer, say to the Almighty, Depart from us.

The Third Excuse.

But the Excuse of some is, *I want Utterance for Family-prayer. I would pray, but I am not gifted for it. I cannot pray.* To this I answer, we often say, *I cannot*, when *I will not*, is the Bottom of it. Suppose, a severe penalty were by the Magistrate laid upon every prayerless Family. Daniel, because he would pray with his Family was thrown to the Lions for it. Suppose a lighter punishment far away were to be inflicted on all them who do not pray in their Family; Suppose a Goal, or a Fine were inflicted on you for it: Would you then continue Prayerless? Behold, the great God has by the Statute Lawes of Heaven, ordained that a Prayerless Family shall have all manner of Calamities inflicted on it; The Lions, the Devils of the pit below, shall devour the unhappy Master of such a Family. And will not this

this make you pray? Besides, When you find that you *Want things*, then you don't want *Words*; the poor man does not *want words*, when he is to *Ask Alms*. O sit down and look upon the *Wants & Woes* of your poor Family, you cannot then but have *something to say* for them. And what tho you cannot pray *Quaintly*? Yet you may pray *Graciously*, and pray *Acceptably*. Florid, *Elegant Orations* in your Prayers, God expecteth not; a few humble, penitent, broken-hearted *Groans*, are of more account with Him. Tho you *Chatter like a Crane or a Swallow*, as once *Hezekiah* did, yet the success may be wonderful and glorious. What shall I say? *Moses* was unwilling to do what God bade, on this very Score, in *Exod. 4. 10. I am not Eloquent*; But the reply of God was, *Go, and I will teach thee what thou shalt say*. O that you would make a Tryal of it. Friend, By'nd by Call thy Family together; Tell them, That you must not let them remain *prayerless* any longer, lest the Wrath of God break out upon them. So Fall down before the Lord among them all, and pray as well as God shall enable thee: go, I am verily perswaded, *God will teach thee what thou shalt say*. I am sure, thou wilt never have cause to Repent of the Attempt.

S E C T. XII.

YOU have not so much as a shadow of Reason to render, why you should not pray with your

your Families. Let me now a little reprove
why you should; for I am

III. To propound some *Incentives* unto
Family Prayer.

And there are chiefly Two Considerations
which I have to set before you.

Consider, First, the Direful & grievous Curse
which prayerless Families are exposed unto.
Such Families, they are the very *Suburbs* of Hell
it self. A Prison, A Dungeon, is to be choise
before a Living in them. There is a Word
an awful Word, which a Prophet of God has
written in a certain place; Methinks, that Word
falls like a Thunderbolt of Death upon the Families,
in which God is not prayed unto.
Written in Jer. 10. 25. O Lord, --- pour
thy fury on the heathen, which know thee not; on
Families which call not on thy name. Strikes it
told unto the heart of the Reader? May
These are the Ireful and the direful words
the Lord Jesus Christ himself; He counts
Prayerless Family no better than a Pagan Family.
And now, he speaks not as an Advocate for
your Family. He saies not, Lord, vouchsafe
pity, and thy pardon to that Family; But
saies, Lord, pour out thy fury upon that
because it calls not on thy Name. Alas, have
no more Kindness for your Families, than to
them open to the Fury of a great and a
GOD? cruel people, that you are;

Resolution.

15

Read in *Zeck. 5.* begin. about a *Flying Roll*,
Twenty Cubits long, Ten Cubits broad; entering
into these and those Houses, to consume them. I
am to tell you, That *Prayerless Houses* are to feel
the force of this *Flying Roll*. An huge Roll of
Curses belongs to that House in which *Prayer* is
not upheld. The *Curse* of God is the Sauce in
every Dish, the *Curse* of God is the Cover to
every Bed, in that lamentable Family. Houses
molested with *Devils*, are not more miserable
than Houses destitute of *Prayers*. I have seen it
in an house, where the *Devils* have had Possessi-
on of a Child, that when *Family-Prayer* began,
the *Devils* would make hideous Roarings and
Noises in the Room, as being under a Vexation
thereat, which was intolerable to them. Truly,
The *Devils* have no Disturbance in Houses where
Family-prayer is not maintained; *prayerless* houses
are haunted houses, and the Fiends of Darkness
reign, and ramp, there without Controul. In-
deed, *Prayerless Families*, are not only the *Causes*,
but also the *Causes* of all Impiety. They
bring an Irresistible Deluge of Disorder upon all
the Town and Land; and cause all the Countrey
to swarm with the workers of iniquity who call not
on the Lord. And in the prayer-
less household is now cursed by God, so he will
be cursed by all his *Houses*, he brings
curse on them, and they will stand against
him in the Day of Vengeance.

This shot repeats the previous one, but with different lighting.

your Families. Let me now a little represent why you should; for I am

III. To propound some *Incentives* unto *Family Prayer*.

And there are chiefly Two Considerations which I have to set before you.

Consider, First, the Direful & grievous *Curses* which prayerless Families are exposed unto. Such Families, they are the very *Suburbs* of Hell it self. A Prison, A Dungeon, is to be chosen before a living in them. There is a Word, an awful Word, which a Prophet of God has written in a certain place; *Mark* that Word falls like a Thunderbolt of Death upon the Families, in which God is not prayed unto. Written in Jer. 10. 25. O Lord, --- pour out thy fury on the heathen, which know thee not; on the Families which call not on thy name. Strikes it not cold unto the heart of the Reader? Man, These are the Ireful and the direful words of the Lord Jesus Christ himself; He counts the Prayerless Family no better than a Pagan Family. And now, he speaks not as an Advocate for the poor Family; He saies not, Lord, vouchsafe thy pity, and thy pardon to that Family; But he saies, Lord, pour out thy fury upon that family, because it calls not on thy Name. Alas, have you no more Kindness for your Families, than to lay them open to the Fury of a great and a terrible GOD? cruel people, that you are,

Read in Zech. 5. begin. about a *Flying Roll*,
 Twenty Cubits long, Ten Cubits broad, entering
 into these and those Houses, to consume them. I
 am to tell you, That *Prayerless Houses* are to feel
 the force of this *Flying Roll*. An huge Roll of
Curses belongs to that House in which *Prayer* is
 not upheld. The *Curse* of God is the Sauce in
 every Dish, the *Curse* of God is the Cover to
 every Bed, in that lamentable Family. Houses
 molested with *Devils*, are not more miserable
 than Houses destitute of *Prayers*. I have seen it
 in an house, where the *Devils* have had Possessi-
 on of a Child, that when *Family-Prayer* began,
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 thereat, which was intolerable to them. Truly,
 The *Devils* have no Disturbance in Houses where
Family-prayer is not maintained; *prayerless* houses
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 deed, *Prayerless Families*, are not only the Ca-
 ges, but also the Causes of all Impiety. They
 bring an Irresistible Deluge of Disorder upon all
 the Town and Land; and cause all the Countrey
 to swarm with the workers of iniquity who call not
 upon the Lord.

And as the *prayer-
 less Householder* is now cursed by God, so he will
 one day be cursed by all his House; he brings
 curses on them, and they will spend curses on
 him, in the Day of Vengeance. In the ever-
 burning

burning lake, they will curse the day that ever they saw thy prayerless house, and, *That House brought me to this Hell!* This, this will be their Cry world-without End.

Consider, next, the marvellous *Blessings* which belong to all *Praying Families*. It was noted about the Family of Obed-Edom, in 1. Sam. 6. 11. *The Lord blessed Obed-Edom and his household,* while the *Ark of the Lord* was there. So shall it be noted about the Family of a *praying Householder*; The Lord will bless that man and his *Household*, while that *Prayer to the Lord* is there. *Family-prayers*, are *conjoined prayers*, and *united prayers*; thus they become very *successful prayers*. What *Encouragement* is there given to them, in that promise, Matth. 18. 19. *If two of you shall agree on earth, touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them.* O let your *Families Agree* in the *Asking of grace*, in the *Asking of glory*, in the *Asking of every good thing*; *Prayer in Confort*, will obtain it all. When *Cornelius* was at his *Family-prayers*, what a signal favour did the Almighty God show unto him? Some while since, a whole Town in *Switzerland* was very suddenly destroyed by an *Earth-quake*, all except one peice of an house, in which a good man happned then to be at *Prayer* with his *Family*. Tis impossible to tell, O how great is the goodness which God has laid up for Houses that seek unto Him! But besides all the other

other comforts of a *praying Householder*, he has
This peculiar to him, *He teacheth all his Family*
to. A *praying Parent* will have *praying chil-*
ren. *David* prayed in his Family, and his
Son Solomon prov'd a *praying young man*. A
praying Master will have *praying Servants*. *A-*
braham pray'd in his Family, and his Man *Elic-*
zer became a very *praying person*. Thus, O
 man, all thy *young people*, will be filling every
 corner of thy house with *Prayers* for thy *Felicity*.

O consider of these things; and such let the
 Impression of them upon you be; That you
 may by *Prayers* with your *Families* Engage your
 Houses to serve the Lord.

SECT. XIII.

There are two Things more, by the Dis-
 charge of which, we Engage out Houses
 to serve the Lord; and those Two are in a man-
 ner One

Family-Instruction;
 and

Family-Government.

I link these together, because of their near
 Dependance and Agreement in their Exercise.
 This therefore is the Address now to be made
 unto us,

Let *Family-Instruction* and so *Family-Govern-*
ment be maintained in our Houses, that they may
 serve the Lord.

Let there be no *untaught* and *unrul'd* Families
 among

The Good man's

among us; but let us be careful about the Education of such as belong to our Families. I beseech you, let there be a difference between *English Houses* and *Indian Wigwams* in the midst of us, and let not *English Parents* be as indulgent and negligent as they report the *Indians* are. And give me leave to say, You that are *Mothers* have a special Advantage to instil the Fear of God into the souls of them that sit upon your knees. 'Tis said in Prov. 1. 8. *My son, forsake not the law of thy Mother.* Solomon was well instructed by his *Mother*, and it proved his eternal Benefit. 'Tis not for Nothing, that in the *Sacred Records*, when men have proved good or bad, it is noted, Their *Mothers* were *in* and such. You that are *Mothers* may inculcate Religion into your Children earlier and easier than their *Fathers* can.

SECT. XIV.

I shall Repeat the Method, which we were in before; and under *Family-Instruction* take in that *Family-Government* which you are to be studious of. I am

I. To offer some *Directions* about *Family-Instruction.*

The *Directions* to be given hereabout, may be referr'd unto two Heads.

First, The *Matter* of Family Instruction.

The *Family-Instruction*, with which we urge

our houses to the Service of God, are to have no less than Four things composing of it.

First, There are Holy Lessons, with which we are to *Instruct* our Families. We are to make them *hear*, and make them *learn* those Lessons, which may give to the young ones Knowledge and Discretion. Teach them the Scriptures of Truth. 'Twas said to Timothy, in Cap. 3. 15. From a Child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures; No doubt, his Godly Mother and Grandmother were the cause of his doing so. We should procure that our young ones may read the holy Scriptures, and mind the holy Scriptures, and know the holy Scriptures, even from a Child. Let them have by heart, here and there a Verse, or a Paragraph; Especially in the Psalms and in the Proverbs: if you would have them good, teach them the Psalms of David; if you would have them wise, teach them the Proverbs of Solomon. And Scripture-Stories are to be told unto them, as soon as ever they enquire after new things and strange.

But while we do thus, we are also to teach them the Doctrines of God. Inculcate upon them the Principles of Religion, as often as you do the Knife on the Stone in the Whetting of it. 'Twas said unto the Lord Jesus, in Matth. 22. 16. Master, Thou teachest the way of God in Truth. Every Master should render his young ones able to say that unto himself, Master, Thou teachest

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teachest the Truth of God. Especially, We should be sure that they be not ignorant of any *Saving Truths*. Tell them, What they *are* come to by the *First Adam*, and what they *may* come to by the *Second Adam*. Tell them what *Covenant* man was once, and What *Covenant* man is now to be saved by. Yea, let none of the Things to be *believed*, none of the Things to be *practised*, none of the Things to be *pray'd for*, be left unmentioned in your Instructions. All the *Lessons* of the *Creed*, the *Commandments*, and the *Lords Prayer* are to be laid before them. And we are to be particularly faithful to them, in the *present Truths*; the *labouring Truths*, the *witnessed Truths* of the Times, we should see our young ones well informed in. Give them at this day to be sensible, who is the *Supreme Head*, and *King* of the Church, and what *Orders* He has appointed to be observed there.

Secondly. There are serious *Questions* with which we are to *Instruct* our *Families*. And there are peculiarly Two Things which we are to *question* our young ones about.

Some *Questions* we are to put unto them,

First, Which Concern their *Souls*.

And here, yet further to particularize, We are to try them with *Questions* about their *Understanding*. Our Lord Jesus asked his Disciples, in *Matth. 13: 51*. *Have ye understood all these things?* Thus are we to ask our young people,

Do you understand the great Mystery of Godliness? O keep up the great Ordinance of Catechising in your houses. Before your little Folks have left off living upon *Milk*, let them be so well versed in their *Milk for Babes*, that they may readily answer any Question there. The *Echoes* of this Exercise, are a most refreshing Melody in the ears of God himself. Ask we our young ones, What they think of *God*, and of *Christ*, and of *Themselves*; and let them be able to recount the *Words of Truth*.

We are to search them also with *Questions* about their *Experience*. As our Lord asked His Family, in Joh. 16. 31. *Do ye now believe?* So should we ask our young people, *Have you Experienced a work of Regeneration in your souls?* Ask them, *Have you ever yet carried a labouring and heavy-laden soul unto the Lord Jesus Christ?* It was the Advice of Wisdom, *Know the state of thy Flocks*. Thus, we should endeavour to *Know the state of the Souls* which we are to be concerned for; to know whether they are in a *Natural*, or a *Renewed* state.

Once more, We are to help them with *Questions* about their *Temptations*. It was a *Question* once given to some, in Luc. 24. 38. *Why do Thoughts arise in your hearts?* Even so we should Enquire of our young people, *What Thoughts are you most troubled with?* Enquire, what *Fears*, enquire what *Snares* they are most endangered

by. Be alwaies jealous, lest as the serpent beguiled Eve, so their minds be corrupted. Moreover Some Questions we are to put upon them, Secondly, which concern their Lives. It was once an Interrogatory which some were put unto, in Luc. 23. 17. *What manner of communications have ye?* Thus we are to Examine our young people about the Words and the Works, that fill their Lives. There are especially three things which they should be Examined about, their Prayer, their Time, and their Company. Ask them, whether they live without Prayer or no? Whether in Prayer they secretly and sincerely pour out their souls before the Lord? Ask them, How they spend their Time? How much Idle Time, and how much useful Time, they allow unto themselves? And ask them, What their Company is? Whom they sit withal? Whether vain Persons and Fools, or the Saints which are the excellent, and all those that fear God? Our Question will prove their Safeguard, if it be well administred.

Thirdly, There are faithful Reproofs with which we are to Instruct our Families. Tis said in Prov. 6. 33. *The Reproofs of Instruction are the way of life.* When we give Instruction, we shall have occasion to give Reproof, too often with it. There is no Family that has not Miscalriages that are to be reprov'd in it. Young people too commonly are wild people; and will

But some *Castigations* they will rarely be kept in order. To some of them *smart Words*, to others of them *smart Blowes*, will be too often due. Tis said in *Prov. 13. 24.* *He that spareth his Rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chastens him betimes.* *Frowns* are due to all, and *Rods* to some. *Transgressors* in the Family. But there are two *Negative* and two *Positive Rules* to be minded in *Reproving* of them.

The *Negative Rules* are these two.

First, *Reprove not Furiously.* It is said in *Jam. 1. 20.* *The wrath of man, worketh not the righteousness of God.* Remember, Nothing will be so well done in a passion, but what may be done better out of it. If you are to *chide*, yet *chide* not in a *Fury*. Do not call *vile Names*; much more, do not *swear*, do not *curse*, do not *Rage* with a *Tongue set on fire of hell*. If you are to *smite*, yet *smite* not in a *Fury*. *Bloody*, *wounding*, *outragious Buffetings* are to be avoided; lest there be cause to say of you, *Cursed is their Anger for it is fierce, and their Wrath for it is cruel.*

Secondly *Reprove not for ever.* Tis said in *Pf. 103. 9.* *God will not alwaies chide, neither will He keep his anger for ever.* To be *alwaies finding faults*, is the way *never* to be curing them. A *perpetual Wrangling* is a *continual Dropping*, which there is no enduring of; it prejudices the hearts of them that feel it, against all that shall

be said unto them.

The *Positive Rules* are these Two.

First, *Reprove Reasonably*. Let there be *just Cause* for it. When you *reprove*, it must be for a *true cause*. As it was said of our Saviour in *Isai. 11. 3.* *He shall not reprove after the hearing of His ears.* Thus, we may not go by meer *Hear-say*, when we reprove those that are under us. And it must be for a *great Cause*. Tis said of the Spirit in *Joh. 16. 8.* *He will reprove the world for SIN.* The sinful thing, the thing for which the wrath of God comes, the thing which the soul of the Lord hates, this we are to reprove. We must not throw away *Reproofs upon Nothing*, or upon *Every thing*.

Secondly, *Reprove Scripturally*. Tis said in *2. Tim. 3. 16.* *All Scripture is profitable for Reproof.* A *Reproof* with a *Scripture* comes with a more than ordinary Majesty and Authority. When we *Reprove* those that are under us, First, make them read a *Text* which does *Condemn* what we would rebuke, and then set it home with a very warm lively vigorous Application.

Fourthly, There are solemn *Charges* with which we are to *Instruct* our *Families*. It was the Character which the Lord gives of *Abraham*, in *Gen. 18. 19.* *I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.* O that this might

he said of every Householder here; I know him, that he will take all of his house, one by one, and Charge every one, of them to keep the way of the Lord! What saies the Apostle, in 1. Thes. 2. 11. We charged every one of you, as a father his children. We should call aside our young people, and lay upon them, the Charge of David, in 1. Chron. 28. 9. My son, know thou the God of thy Father, and Serve Him with a perfect Heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all Hearts; if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee, if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever.

Charge them; and this especially about four Things. Lay upon them that Charge of God in 1. Joh. 3. 23. This is His Commandment, that you believe on the Name of his Son. Charge them to accept of Christ Jesus, as their Prince and their Saviour; Charge them to repair unto Christ Jesus for Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. Lay also upon them that Charge of God, in Mat. 6. 6. Enter into thy Closet and pray to thy Father in secret. Charge them to Retire for their Devotions every day; Charge them to let not a day pass them, without Crying to God for His Mercy, and Pardon, and Salvation. Once more, Lay upon them that Charge of God, in Prov. 1. 10. My son, if Sinners entice thee, consent thou not, Charge them, that they be not the Companions of Fools; Charge them

them that they do not associate themselves into an Intimacy and a Familiarity with any but such as may be sober, discreet, blameless persons. Finally, Lay upon them that Charge of God in Hag. 1. 5. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your waies.* Charge them, that they Consider what their present Condition is, and what their future Condition is like to be; Charge them, that they consider of their past Behaviour, and of the Death, and Judgment, and Eternity which is yet before them. A young man has become a real Convert by being obliged unto Consideration for one Quarter of an Hour in a Day. Wish for them, say to them, *Oh that they were wise, that they would Consider!* In a word, Let your Charge on them, be that, which Holy Bolton gave to his Children, when he dyed, *I charge you, that at the Day of Judgment, none of you dare to meet me in an Unregenerate estate.*

Secondly. The Manner of Family-Instruction.

Tis to be performed in such a Manner, as may best Attain the Ends of it. Particularly.

First, We are to *Instruct* our Families very Seasonably. We are told in Matth, 24. 45. *The Ruler over the Household is to give them their meat in due Season.* There lies much in the Time we take for the Work. We should indeed have our Frequent Times, to do it: We should speak what may be for the *Instruction* of our Families, every

every day, and often in a day; and on various occasions be dropping our savoury Admonitions. Even when we sit at the *Table*, we should rarely Rise without feeding the *Minds*, as well as the *Mouthes* of our Attendants. Much more at the *Hours of Prayer*, we should do something that may make them more acquainted with *Divine Objects* than they were before. But we should likewise have our *Stated Times* to do it. Especially *Sacred Time* will be very properly a *Stated Time* for it. On the *Dayes* of the Lord, we should instruct our Houses in the *Things* of the Lord; that were infinitely better than to be Sleeping or Talking at an idle rate, as then too many do.

But about the *Stated Time* for *Family-Instruction*, there is a double Discretion to be used. It is to be dispatched in a *Quiet Time*, in a Time when there is no Disturbance by *Passions* within, or *Noises* without. It is said in Eccles. 9. 16. *The words of wise men are heard in quiet*: and no wise man will speak when there is not *Quietness* enough to allow an Audience for him. And it is to be dispensed in a *Lively Time*, in a Time when *Spirits* are stirring, and *Affections* are vigorous. Tis said in Rom. 12. 11. *Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*; thus, this piece of Service for the Lord, is to be done, when there is a *Fervency* of Disposition thereunto.

Secondly

Secondly, We are to *Instruct* our *Families* very *pertinently*, Accommodate our *Instructions* to their *Conditions*.

Are there any *Unconverted* persons in our *Families*? Let them be *Suitably* *Instructed*. Say to them as in *Psal. 34. 11. Hearken to me and I will Teach you the Fear of the Lord*. Let them be warned of the *Dangers* which do threaten their miserable souls; and let them be *stirred* to the *Duties* that may lay them at the *Pool*, in the way of our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

Are there any *Converted* persons in our *Families*? Let them too be *suitably* *Instructed*. We read in *Joh. 8. 31. Jesus said unto the Jewes which believed on Him, continue in my word*. Let them be quickened to *continue* in their *Faith*, and *Love* and *Zeal*. Let them have *Weapons* to furnish them against all their *Difficulties*, and *Cordials* to *Revive* them under all their *Discouragements*.

Are there any *Unfruitful* Souls, in our *Families*? *Instruct* them *suitably*, by setting before them what is the *Doom* of the *Barren Tree*, and of the *Barren Ground*; even, to be *cut down*, and *burnt up* for ever. And say, *O glorifie your heavenly Father by bringing forth much fruit*.

Are there any *Back-sliding* Souls, in our *Families*? *Instruct* them *suitably*, by setting before them the *Displeasure* of *God* at such as *dram back*, and His *extreme Wrath* on them whose

Goodness

Goodness is as the Morning cloud and the early dew;
and say, Remember whence thou art fallen, repent,
and do thy first works. Thus are we to suit the
the case of those whom we give Instruction to.

Thirdly. We are to *Instruct* our Families very Diligently. 'Tis a thing that we are to labour in. 'Twas enjoind in Deut 6. 7. The words which I command thee, thou shalt teach them Diligently unto thy Children. It calls for our Hearts and our Pains. When we set about it, we should think with our selves, We know not how short our Opportunities may be; we know not whether we shall ever speak more to those whom we now direct our selves unto. In this as well as in other such Cases, we should hear the voice of our own Uncertainty & Mortality; tis that in Eccles. 9. 10. Do with thy might what thy hand finds to do, for there is no work, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou art going. 'Tis the Work of the Lord, about which we are, when we are, *Instructing* our Families; tis not to be done slothfully; we find in Jer. 28. 10. cursed is the man, who doth it so; tis to be done heartily; we find in 2. Chron. 31. 21. that is the way to prosper in it. O let us be as Diligent in *Instructing* of our young people, as the Emiffaries of Hell are in Seducing of them.

Fourthly, We are to *Instruct* our Families by Example. Be Exemplary; and follow the Directory of that geat man, who said in Psal. 101. 10. I will walk within my house with a perfect heart

Let

Let our *Walk*; as well as our *Talk*, show the young people with us how they are to *walk and to please God*; and let us be able to call upon them, *Do you follow me, as I follow Christ*. Let us give such Expressions of *Love* to God and his *Truths* and His *Wayes*, that our Families may come after us in the like. Let them discern how to seek the *Face* of God, and how to bear the *Hand* of God, and how to prize the *Word* of God, by seeing how *We* do it our selves. When *Elisha* would get for himself a *double Portion* of the spirit in *Elijah*, he said in 2. King. 2. 10. *If thou see me, it shall be so unto thee*. O that the *Sight* of us, that the *Sight* of our *Piety*, and *Gravity* might *Instruct* our Houses, and help them to a *double Portion* of those *Graces* and *Vertues* which are the *Fruits* of the Spirit. We should study an *Instructive Conversation*; and we should never permit a *Cham*, a young *Cham* in our families, to see us overcome with *Drink*, *Disguised* with *Vice*, or naked with *Folly*; but *In all things* we should show our selves a *Pattern* of good works.

Fifthly. We are to *Instruct* our Families with *Authority*. As the *Minister* is to imitate the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom tis said in *Mat.* 7. 29. *He taught as one having Authority*. So should the *Householder* do. And hence we are to keep up our *Authority* in our families; not permitting the child to be have himself proudly & gain

gainst the Ancient. It is required in Lev. 19. 3. *Thou shalt fear every one his Mother and his Father;* the *Mother* is here put before the *Father*, because commonly she first loseth her *Authority*: but neither *Mother* nor *Father* should suffer themselves to be trampled upon. 'Tis an intolerable thing, for a saucy, impudent, unmannerly child to reply, *I won't*, when a Parent bids him do this or that. You sin grievously, if you do not curb and break the *Wills* of them that you are to bring up in the nurture of the Lord; and if you don't make 'em tremble to break any of your commands. Wherefore let there be that *Wisdom*, that *Meekness*, that *Reservedness*, and *Seriousness* in our Deportments, with which we may *Rule well our own house*, and have our Children in Subjection with all gravity. This is that *Family-Instruction* and *Family-Government* by which we must bring our Houses to serve the Lord.

S E C T. XV.

One might Rationally imagine, that no Exception could be taken at such a profitable and necessary thing as *Family-Instruction* is. Yet this also has Exceptions made against it; and therefore I am endeavouring
 I. To Remove some *Objections* against *Family Instruction*.

Diverse things are by many pleaded, wherefore they take no care to have their Families partakers of *Instruction in Righteousness*.

The First Exception.

One person will for this Plea Exempt himself.
The Inferiours in my Family are very Dull: 'Tis an hard thing to beat into them, any sense of Eternal Concernments.

On this Pretense it is, that poor Negro's especially are kept Strangers to the way of Life; they are kept only as *Horses or Oxen*, to do our Drudgeries; but their *Souls*, which are as white and good as those of other Nations, their *Souls* are not look'd after, but are *Destroyed* for Lack of Knowledge. This is a desperate Wickedness. But are they *dull*? Then *instruct* them the rather. That is the Way to *sharpen* them. 'Tis said in *Psal. 119. 130. The Entrance of thy word gives Understanding to the Simple.* Be they never so *simple*, you may increase their *Wis* by God's Word. And are they truly *Dull*? Then be not you so too; Let your *Labour* be equal to their *Dulness*. We are told in *Eccl. 10. 10. If the Iron be blunt, then a man must put to the more Strength.* You must be at the Trouble to stoop unto their *Capacities*. Be you as plain, be you as brief in your *Instructions*, as they are *dull* in their *Intellects*. And be frequent, be patient in them; give Line upon line, and Precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. Even *Gutta cavat lapidem* --- a Stone will receive the mark of the Drop that shall often fall upon it.

The Second Exception.

Another person will for this Cause Exempt himself.

The Inferiors in my Family are very Young. Tis too soon to begin with them; we shall only make them take the Name of God in vain by teaching them to talk like Parrots of Religion, before they can conceive better of it.

To this I answer, No, You can't begin with them Too soon. 'Twas said in *Isai. 28. 9. Whom shall wee teach knowledge? Them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts. They are no sooner wean'd but they are to be taught;* and God may give them righter and riper Conceptions of things, than you are well aware. What saies the Wise man, *Train up a Child in the way he should go.* Let the first liquor that is put into them be sweet and good; and they will keep the tang of it all their dayes. *Quo semel est imbuta recens --*

Are they Young? Yet the Devil has been with them already. Tis said in *Psal. 58. 3. They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. They no sooner step than they stray, they no sooner lisp than they ly.* Satan gets them to be proud, profane, reviling and revengeful, as young as they are. And, I pray, Why should not you be afore-hand with him? And this the rather, since the Lord Jesus calleth for them. He saies

in Marc. 10. 13. *Suffer little children to come unto me.* For know, 'Tis not an *Affront*, but an *Honour* unto the Name of God, for such young ones to *Learn the truth as it is in Jesus*. It was very pleasing unto the Lord Jesus Christ, when in Matth. 21. 15. *The Children cryed Hosanna* to Him. If your Children do not cry *Hosanna*, they will call wicked *Names*, they will curse and lie, and take the Name of God in vain; and which is best? *Judge ye*. Besides we have the Call of God; in Psal. 148. 12. *Ye Children, praise the Lord.*

The Third Exception.

A Third person will urge this against it.

I want Abilities to manage this work, my Parts and Gifts are too mean to go thro it.

To this I answer; God will *Accept* you, tho you do it meanly. The Prophet made this *Apology* for himself, in Jer. 1. 6. *Ah! Lord God, I cannot speak.* But God answered, *Say not so, Tho you have but ope Talent, yet let it not ly by.* Though you have only *Goats hair*, or *Badders skins*, yet employ them for the use of the *Tabernacle*. The Apostle tells the Hebrews, *You need one to teach you the first principles of the Oracles of God;* yet unto them he said, *Exhort one another.*

Moreover, God will *Assist* you to do it better. *Twas affirmed to him in Joshua 1. 9.*

Have

Resolution,

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good Courage, for the Lord thy God is with thee. Thus be it affirmed here; God has commanded thee, Do it as courageously and as comfortably as thou canst: His Presence will continually cause thee to grow in thy Accomplishments To him that hath shall be given. Keep watering the Olive-plants about thy Table. He that watereth shall be watered also himself.

The Fourth Exception.

A Fourth person perhaps will not blush to say, I want Opportunity to attend this Work, my Employment will not suffer me.

But let no man argue so. Man, hast thou Time to Feed thy Family and no time to Teach them? The poorest among you all should say, as in Psa. 119. 72. The Law of thy mouth is better to me, than thousands of Gold and silver. 'Tis better to lay up for thy Family the Riches of God's Law, than Thousands of pounds. Nothing, nothing should put by their Instruction in the way of peace. If you do not want an Heart, you will not want a Time for the Instruction of your Families. No man could have more business lying on his hands than David had, who had the Affairs of a mighty Kingdom to distract him; yet of him could his own Son say as in Prov. 4. 4. He taught me.

The Fifth Exception.

'Tis possible a fifth person may have uncomfortable cause to plead,

I have

I have those in my Family that will not be Instructed ; I can't Order them so far as to make them submit unto it.

In this unhappy Case, What shall be done but this ? We are to pray for these Creatures, that their *Hearts* may be tam'd and bow'd by Him, that has them in His Hand. We are also to watch when some *Affliction* or some *Amazement* is come upon them : then God opens their ear to *Discipline* ; then the *Wild Asses* are in the *Mouth* where you may find them. We may likewise call in the help of some grave, pious, holy Minister, who may come to them with the spirit and power of *Elias*, *To turn the hearts of the Children to their Fathers.*

Finally. If your *Children* refuse to be Instructed, What saies the Wise man, *A Rod for the fools back.* If your *Servants* refuse to be Instructed, What saies the Good man, *He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house.*

S E C T. XVI.

BEfore I have done, I must Endeavour

III. To propound some *Incentives* unto *Family-Instruction.*

Wherefore

Consider, first, the *Needfulness* of it. Christians, Instruct your Families, for I may say, *This is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* And as *Gods Will*, so their *State* call

callesth for it. O look upon the Ignorance of your Families. May it not be said of them as in Psal. 14. 2. *The Lord looked on the Children -- to see if there were any that did understand; they are all gone aside.* Instruct them; lest they be destroyed for lack of knowledge. Look upon the Corruption of your Families. May it not be said of them, as in Eccles. 5. 3. *The hearts of the Children is full of Evil.* Instruct them, lest they be the Children of Belial, to consume your eyes and grieve your hearts.

In a Word, Instruct your Families or else the Blood of their Souls will be required at your hands. It was complain'd of old, in Jer. 2. 34. *In thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of poor innocents.* What a dreadful word is that! and what a dreadful thing will it be, for your poor Families to follow you in the ever-burning Lake below; shrieking and roaring, *If you had done your Duty to us, tis like we had never arrived here!*

Consider, Secondly the Usefulness of it. Instruct your Families and it will issue in their Good. They shall be brought home to God. As he said in Psal. 51. 13. *I will teach them, and they shall be converted unto thee.* You may see converted Children, and converted Servants, filling of your Families. They may bless the name of God for ever, that ever they knew your House, or saw your Face; because you have promoted

promoted in them that *Knowledge* which is *Life Eternal*.

Instruct your *Families*; and it will issue in your *Joy*. They shall afford you that sight, of which the Apostle said, *I have no greater Joy*. Tis said in Prov. 10. 1. *A wise Son makes a glad Father*. Tis a taught son that proves a wise son. What a joyful thing will it be, for you to see all your Children and Servants, calling you their *spiritual Father*, here! But what a much-more joyful thing will it be for you to meet them all at the *Right Hand* of our Lord in the day of His *Appearing*!

O Consider of these Things; and go away determined, [I hope you are now determined] *Thus I and my House will serve the Lord*.

Time
 Secondly the *Witness* of it
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TIME DISCERNED.

ECCLES. VIII. 5.

A wise man's heart discerneth TIME

THe Famous Writer of these Words was that Royal Preacher, Solomon. After much Experience of the World, and after much Repentance for that Experience, he drew up a Treatise *De summo bono*, concerning the chief Good of man. The penitent and inspired Monarch, having arrived unto the Top of this world, pitties the poor men whom he sees toiling and sweating to get up the rocky hill after him, and expecting to find Happiness there; & with a loud voice he gives this warning to them, Sirs, You will be all mistaken, you will meet with nothing but Vanity and Vexation here.

The Context here contains the Reflections of this wise prince on the Countenance which he

had given to publick and open Idolatry in *Israel* and the compliance which they that should have advised the contrary yeilded thereunto. Men seek out many inventions to excuse themselves from bearing an humble but a faithful Testimony against any sinful thing which their Superiours may invite them to. One of these Inventions is mentioned in the fourth verse of this Chapter; it is drawn from the Uncontrouleable Power of them that sometimes enjoin a sinful thing. To this Excuse we have a two-fold Answer in the fifth verse. We have two things in it. First, the Good of Religion. Tis said, *Who so keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing.* q. d. Be true to Gods Commandments & thy own Conscience, let who will be offended at it; the wonderful providence of the Almighty will in the mean time be concerned for thy Safety and Security. A man gets no real Hurt by doing his Duty. Secondly, the Need of Discernment. Tis said *A wise mans heart discerneth both Time and Judgment.* q. d. In the doing of this, and every other Duty, two things are to be much regarded. Mind the Season of the duty, and mind the Manner of the duty: much harm will thereby be prevented in discharging of it. To the former of these two Regardables that I would now insist upon. Behold a general Rule applyed unto a particular Case: the Case is, *the Rebuking and Refusing of Sin;* but the Rule is, *A*

Man always will discern his time to do what he has to do. To Discern the Time, --- it must needs also signifie to Improve the Time. Wherefore the Doctrine is,

A wise man will discern and improve his Time, to do what is incumbent on him.

Our Propositions are to be such as these.

Prop. 1.

The Blessed God affordeth to men in this World a Time to discharge the Duties incumbent on them. There are two things incumbent on us; to Do good, and to Get good. The good we are to do, is to Honour God; and the good we are to get, is to Enjoy God. Those two things comprise all our Duties; and they make up the Errand which we come into the World upon.

Now, while we are in this world, God allowes us a Time for this work; we have time not only in the larger sense of it, but also in the stricter sense of it; We have time not only in Duration, but also in Opportunity. There is not any Duty enjoined upon us, but there is a Season for it allowed unto us. 'Tis an Observation about the things that shall be, in Eccles. 3. 1. *To every thing there is a Season, and a Time to every purpose.* Thus it may be said about the things that should be, *There is no Duty, but God hath provided us a Time and a Season for it.* We have some golden parts of Time, whereof we may say, *This is the*

Time for such a duty; and again, *This is the Time for another duty.*

First, We have a *Time to do Good* while we are here in the world. We have a *time to exercise every Vertue*, to use all that *Piety and Charity*, all that *Holiness & Righteousness*, which the Lord requireth of us. The *Good* which we are to do is expressed in *Mic. 6. 8.* *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.* We meet with many *Times* to do those *Good things* before we dye. We have now our *Time* to acquaint our selves with God, in all the methods of Devotion; our *Time* to acknowledge God in all the waies of New Obedience. We have also our *Time* to advantage our Neighbours; our *Time* to promote the internal and eternal *Salvation*, and the external *Prosperity* of them that are about us.

Secondly, We have likewise a *Time to Get Good* while we are in the world. We have a *Time* to obtain all that *Favour*, and all that *Fellowship* with God which our Mighty Redeemer is the Authour of. The *Good* which we are to get, is comprised in *Isai. 55. 3.* *The sure Mercies of David.* We have our *Times* to secure all those *Good things*. Every man of us may say, *I have a Time to get my Sin pardoned*; he may say, *I have a Time to get my Soul renewed*; he may say, *I have a Time to get all the Promises of the*
New

New Covenant fulfilled unto my soul for evermore.

Prop. 11.

It is no small part of *Wisdom* for men to discern and improve the *Time* which God affordeth unto them. When the Gales of *Opportunity* blow in the Sails of *Time*, every man should see and watch his own *Opportunity*. To *Discern* the *Time*, is to mind the time, and to use the time, for the performance of our *Duty*. Now tis a wise man that will so discern the *Time*. *Sapience* or *Wisdom* is a Vertue of the *Understanding*, whereby a man perceives the *Dependence* of things; the *Connexion* of things, and the *Consequence* of things being understood, therein *Wisdom* is discovered. To discern the time is an instance of this. Tis *Wisdom* for a man to lay his *Time* and his *Work* together. Tis *Wisdom* for a man to fore-see what will be the Issue of such a *Work* at such a *Time*. But besides the *Nature* of *Wisdom* evidently appearing in this thing, we have a two-fold further witness to the *Wisdom* of it.

First, The *Testimony* of *Scripture* thereabout, shewes, that it is *Wisdom* for men to discern and improve their time. What the all-wise, the only-wise GOD calleth *Wisdom*, is unquestionably to be esteemed so. The *Redeeming* of *Time* is great *Wisdom* in the Language and the Account of God. It was said in Eph. 5. 16. Walk as wise, Redeeming the time --- Much of the same Date

and *Tenour*, was the Epistle to the *Colossians*. In that Epistle also we have the like passage, in Cap. 4. 5. *Walk in Wisdom, Redeeming the time.* Tis probable the Apostle therein has a special Reference to Persecutions, which good men were then exposed unto. To Redeem the Time, was a proverbial Phrase of old, signifying, To Keep out of trouble as long as one can. Thus the *Chaldean* Soothsayers were told in their distress, Dan. 2. 8. *I know that ye would gain the time.* This was the Counsel of the Apostle, By a prudent, holy, careful, and inoffensive Carriage towards them that would interrupt you in the worship of Jesus Christ, gain Time what you can for the quiet practice of it. Well, If it be Wisdom to gain time for the Service of God, surely, tis Wisdom to spend time in the Service of God. It was the singular Character & Commendation of the *Issacharites*, in 1. Chron. 12. 32. *They had Understanding in the times, to know what Israel ought to do.* Tis an understanding man, who doth so know his Time, as to do his Work. Of a Time-losing man, the Scripture saith, *He is a Fool.* It saies in Prov. 18. 16 *Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a Fool?*

Secondly, The Prevention of Sorrow thereby, shewes, That it is Wisdom for men to discern and improve their Time. It is great Wisdom to prevent great Sorrow. Now nothing in the world fills the heart of man more with Anguish

and

And Anger, than the *Missing* of Time. When a man has missed his Time for his Work, it causeth an unspeakable Regret within him. We read of some professors, who missed their time to Entertain Christ Jesus and His Mercy: with what a marvellous Agony did they cry out, in Matth. 25. 11. *Lord, Lord, open to us!* Well might they be called Foolish, who thus came too late. The horror of it being once only Represented by some profane people, who acted the *Foolish Kings* in a Play, at a City in Germany, it even kill'd a Prince that was a Spectator of it. 'Tis impossible to utter the Confusion which the slipping of time does put the souls of men into. When Esau had missed his Time to procure a Blessing for himself, how did he resent it? We are told in Gen. 27. 34. *He cry'd with a great and exceeding bitter Cry.* Alas, how should it be otherwise? The slipping of Time is an *Ill*, and an exceeding bitter thing. There are but two sorts of men; both of them find the *Loss of time*, to prove at some time or other, a sad, an evil, a troublesome thing unto them, 'Tis thus especially when their time is come to *Dy*, when their time is to be no more. As for *Godly men*, the *Loss of time* usually throwes *Thorns* on their *Beds* when they come to dy. It grieves the best man to think, *My Time, my Time, I have not so said it out for God as I should have done.* He was a painful & a pious Minister of the Gospel.

pel, who yet breathed out this among his last Groans, *O the Loss of Time!* it sits heavy on my spirit now. As for *Bad men*, the *Loss of Time* flashes Hell fire into their spirits when they come to Dy. It causes terrible wounds and pains in the departing soul of a Sinner to think *I had once a Time to Believe, a Time to Repent, a Time to lay up for Eternity, but now my Time is gone for ever.* The shriek of a poor man going out of the world sometimes has been, *A world of Wealth for an inch of Time.* Certainly, tis Wisdom to prevent such things as these.

The Use of these things remains.

U S E.

Let us all be hence advised to *Discern* and *Improve Time*, which we have to discharge our Duties in. The most of us, tis to be hop'd, may discern Judgment; we know *What* our Duty is, and *How* it is to be dispatched. But let us also *discern Time*; Suffer we not our time to run from us, while we neglect the great Ends which we have it for. O let not the Lord have cause to complain of us as in Jer. 8. 7. *The Birds in the Heaven know their appointed times, but my people do not know.*

That we may *Discern time*, and *improve time*, such Directions as these may well be followed.

Direction I.

Let us *Discern* our Time. and not *lose* our Time. Avoid those Time-wasting things,

which would serve us about our Time, as the High-way men did the poor Traveller in Luc. 10. 30. in his way to Jericho. We are all Travelling in the the way to Eternity; there are these and those Robbers in the way that would plunder us of our time: shun them, fly them. Count *Mis-spence* of Time one of the most wicked and woful follies in the world.

Let us *discern* three things in *all* Time, and permit *no* Time to be devoured by two things which we may be under Temptation to.

The things which we are to discern in *all* Time are these,

First, let us *discern* the *Worth* of *all* Time. Let not an hour pass without this opinion of it, *This hour is too good to be lost.* If we *prize* the Jewel we shall not lose it. It is for our shame that even an Heathen made that complaint, *Quem mihi dabis qui diem aestimet?* Where will you find a man that esteems his Time as he ought to do?

Ponder well what a vast *price* our Lord paid for our Time. We had forfeited all our Time into the hands of infinite revenging Justice; the just wrath of God would have taken away Time and Life from us long ago, if our Lord Jesus had not laid down such a *price* as that in 1. Pet. 1. 18. *To were redeemed, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ.* O don't throw away any of that which cost so dear.

And ponder well what a vast *price* the dying &c

This shot repeats the previous one, but with different lighting.

Time discerned.

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And ponder well what a vast price the *dying* &

the damned set on their Time. We may say of it as Job of another thing, in Cap. 28. 22. Destruction and death, say, we have heard the same thereof with our ears. Even so, Destruction and Death set an high rate upon it. Ask men when Destruction and Death is near to seizing upon 'em, How much would you give now for a little of the time that is gone? They will reply, O, whole mountains of gold for one hour of it! Judge now as you will judge then.

Secondly, Let us Discern the Irrevokableness of our Time. When our time is once gone, it remains Irrevokable, and Irrecoverable for evermore. We may say of every Time that is past, as in Psal. 49. 8. It is precious and it ceaseth forever. The Wish of Hezekiah could once bring back the shadow of the Sun, but never could any man procure a Return of his Time. Sometimes the doleful Cryes of distressed ones have been, Call Time again! call Time again! But alas, Time won't come back for Calling. Oh how should this make us to take heed that we don't abuse any part of our Time, I shall never have this time again! When once our Time has taken wing, what is said of Love in Cant. 8. 7. that may be said of Time, If a man would give all the substance of his house for it, it would utterly be consumed. When once Time is gone, 'tis gone.

Thirdly, let us Discern our Accountableness for all our Time. God maintains us and supplies

us with Time continually. He keeps a Sun to measure it. The time will come when He will reckon with us about all our Time. Tis said in Ecc. 11. 9. O young man walk in the wayes of thy heart; but know thou that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgement. In like sort, let me say, Come, squander away thy Time, even contrive to get the dead commodity off thy hands; but know thou that in the day, when God shall judge the world, all this Time of thine must be accounted for. It was the Law of old, in Exod. 21. 18. If one man smite another, so that he keep his bed, and yet walk abroad again, he shall pay for his healing and the Loss of his Time: Truly so, if we impenitently lose any of the Time which God hath given us, He will make us pay for it, in the day of his pleading with us. Tis said in Matth. 12. 36. Men shall give an account of every idle word. Much more in that day shall men give an account of every idle Hour. The God that hath numbered our Hairs, hath also numbered our Houres. It will be a fearful thing, if at last He say unto us, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thy life has been made up of idle hours.

These things are we to discern in all Time. For the sake hereof, let us now permit no Time to be misplac'd in such things as these.

First, Let us mispend no Time in vanity, of them that live in vain pleasures tis said in 1 Tim. 5. 6. they are Dead while they live. They discern

no Time, and enjoy none. Too much Time is not to be laid out in *Eating* and *Drinking*. To affect *Long Meals*, or to tarry long at the *Wine*, does not become a Christian. Thy Soul is a little too noble a thing sure to be made the Cook of thy *Body*. Moreover, Too much Time is not to be laid out in *Attiring* and *Adorning*. It made an holy man among the Ancients to weep, when in a morning he saw a person longer in *Dressing*, than himself had been in *praying*. Thy *Carcase* that is to feed the Worms ere long should not put by thy cares about thy *Spirit*, which must be in *Weal* or *Woe* for ever. Once more, Too much Time is not to be laid out in *Sporting* and *Gaming*. There are some lawful *Recreations*, of which we should be shy, lest they steal away our *Heart* and our *Time*. That blessed Martyr, *John Hus*, just before he dyed, in a Letter thus bewailed himself, O beg of God to pardon me for the Time I have lost at such a Play, that yet in it self was very innocent. But there are some unlawful *Recreations* also, in which multitudes play away their Time. The plays which depend upon a pure Lot are such. The moral Heathen zealously reproached them. And severe Statutes were made against them when the *Roman Empire* became a *Christian*. Men always loose at them, those things which are better than any that they win, their Time, if not their *Soul*. Secondly, Let us mispend no Time in Idleness.

It was an ill world where the Apostle could say, as in 2. Thes. 3. 11. *There are some that walk disorderly, working not at all.* Every man should be able to make a good Answer to the Question which Pharaoh put unto Joseph's Brethren, *I pray, What is your Occupation?* A big part of our Time should be laid out on our particular Callings. A Calling is an Ordinance of God; Adam in Paradise had a Labour imposed on him. Be diligent in some one or other. No man so fully and foully falls into the possession of the Devil, as the idle man. The Ants, the Bees, and all the Creatures exclaim against him. *Idleness*, tis thundred against in Ezek. 16. 49. as one of the Sins that brought Hell out of Heaven upon Sodom long ago; it will carry from Earth to Hell the souls of them that in it snore away their lives.

When men do not mispend their Time, then do they discern it.

Direction, I I.

Let us Discern our Time, and Attend every Duty in the proper Time.

There is a two-fold Prudence which the Wise man's heart is to be no stranger to.

The First Prudence is,

Let no Day be done out of its Time. We are told in Eccles. 3. 11. *God hath made every thing beautiful in the Time of it.* There is a Nick of Time that we are to take for all we do. Not Snow but Fruit is beautiful in the Summer. Tis

not beautiful for the Duty of *Prayer*, to be done at a *sleepy* time, or at a *busy* time. Tis not beautiful for the Duty of *Reproof* to be done at a time when it can do no good at all. Set not upon this or that Duty at a time when God calls to another Duty. Tis said in Eccles. 8. 6. *To every purpose there is a Time and Judgement.* We may render all our Duties like *Apples of gold in pictures of silver*, by well timing of them.

The Second Prudence is,

Let no Time pass away without its Duty: Let none of our times be unaccompanied with the Duties which belong unto them. As now, there are Duties that belong to a time of *Prosperity*, and Duties which belong to a Time of *Adversity*.

Tis said in Eccles. 7. 14. *In the day of Prosperity be joyful, but in the day of Adversity Consider.* In a time of *Prosperity*: now is a time for men to Remember their Creator before the evil days come; Now is a time for men to set their heart and their soul to seek the Lord who hath given them rest on every side. In a time of *Adversity*, now is a time for men to bring sin to remembrance; now is a time for men to meet the Lord in all the ways of Repentance and Obedience. This is to Discern the Time. But there are especially three sorts of times which we are to fill with the Duties of those Times.

First. Let the Duties of *Worshipping times*, be done in those times. We have our times every

day wherein the Lord saith, *seek my Face*. Now let the *Echo* of our souls be that in Psal. 27. 8. *Thy Face, Lord, we will seek*. We have every day our *times* for private Prayer, our *times* for secret Prayer, our *times* for Reading of, and Thinking on the Word of God. Let those things be faithfully done in those *Times*.

Especially, *Remember the Sabbath Day*. Let *Sabbath-time* be *sanctified-time*. On this day, by all the day long at the pool of Mercy; *Mercy, Mercy*, and Salvation for an immortal soul is this day to be traded for. 'Tis a *Time* that the great God is very Jealous about. He does wonderfully curse the *Souls*, and blast the *Houses*, and ruin the *Countrys* where this Holy *Time* is not acknowledged. He will terribly break the *rest* of those whom His *Rest* shall not be regarded by.

Secondly, Let the Duties of *Visiting Times* be done in those *Times*. 'Tis too commonly seen that *Amici temporis Fures*; our *Friends* are our *Theeves*; they *steal* our *time*, because we don't use our *time*, when then they are with us. 'Tis observable, in Col. 4. 6. as soon as the Apostle had said, *Redeem the time*, he adds, *Let your speech be always with Grace*. That, that indeed is a rare way to *redeem the time*. Let us ordinarily study to do some good, whatever Company we come into. It was observed of that excellent *Orator* by his renowned Friend, *I never was*

in his company, but I went away (Doctior aut Melior) the wiser or the better from him. Abhor, O abhor the useless visits that are quite contrary to all such designs. Mourn if you have been in any Company without being profitable thereunto.

Thirdly, Let the Duties of *Intervening times* be done in those *times*. We have large *Fragments* of time, that are the *Intervals* of our businesses; about these *Fragments* of time, I would say as our Lord said about the *Fragments* of Bread, in Joh. 6. 12. *Gather up those Fragments that nothing be lost.* How many thousands of happy thoughts might we have as we are sitting in the *House*, or walking in the *Street*, otherwise wholly unemployed? The very *Filings* of Gold and of Time are not to be cast away. To discern our time, is to adapt our time.

Direction. III.

Let us discern our Time, and make none but *Good Bargains* about the time. The Scripture once and again tells us, as in Eph. 5. 16. that we are to *Buy up* the time, or *buy out* the time. This is to discern the Time! We must be at some *Cost*, and at some *Charge* for it, if we would not be ill-husbands of our time: We must pay down either *Money* or *Monyes-worth* for it; we must *forego* and *undergo* many things for it. Many things must we *give up*, that our time so may be well employed. The case is ordinarily

So, that either we must resign many *Pleasures*, many *Profits*, many *Honours*, or else we must part with our *time*. Now rather give up all *Delights*, than suffer precious time to be pyrated away. All the things of time, are sometimes Expence little enough for time. Yea, many things must we give back, that so we may not misemploy our time. The *Devil* and our *Lusts* have been trucking for our *time*. The *Devil*, that hellish Hucster, would engross all our *Time* for his own. He deals with us as the *Europeans* dealt at first with the silly *Indians*, who lett go their *Gold*, and *Silver*, and *Diamonds* for *glass-Beads* and *insfil-Toyes*. The Answer that our *Lust* makes to the Tempter is, *Let me have the pleasures of sin for a season, and every season of my time shall be thine*. O but we should be content to give back all that Satan has proffered us for our time; let it be never so much that we might have had for the *misuse* of time, begrutch it not. 'Twas the Speech of *Austia*, *Perde aliquid ut Deo vacet*. If you would have Time for God, or any Good, you must part with something for it.

In a Word, Let us labour now to *Regain* the *Time* that we have been cheated of. The cheef way to do that, is, *By a double Diligence for the time to come*. Make up the time we have made an ill market of, by an extraordinary *Industry* and *Activity* in the time yet before us.

The

The *Israelites* in their Journey to *Canaan* made more way the last year or two, than they had done in almost forty years before. All the many Sermons in the Book of *Deuteronomy* seem preached by *Moses* in the last month or two before he dy'd. O sit down and think well, *How shall I lay out my time for the best Advantage?* Let that be said of us when we dye, *Diu vixit, licet mortui fuit.* He lived long in a little time.

To Purchase our time, is to discern our time.
Direction. I V.

Let us Discern our time, and let us Improve the Present time, to make our peace with the Eternal God.

Alas, All the sinful and woful time of our Unregeneracy is Lost time. One that was converted but about seven years before he dyed, ordered that Epitaph to be inscribed on his Grave, *Here lyes an Aged man who dy'd but seven years old.* Thou dost not live till thou dost repent, till thou dost beleve.

Be sure, there is no Duty so much incumbent on us, as that of Turning from Sin to God in Christ. Well, the great God hath stated the present time for the doing of it. Tis the Warning, the solemn warning of the Holy God unto us, 2. Cor. 6. 2. *Behold, Now is the Accepted time, Now is the Day of Salvation.* Let those that are not yet born-again, discern this their time. O ye souls in peril, What is it that ye resolve upon?

Your

Your time is *to Day, to Day*, if you will bear the voice of God. Let me say about this Time, as Boaz about that Land in Ruth, 4. 4. If you will redeem it, redeem it. O Delay not; Dally not, Trifle not about this grand Concern; Do not say as the unhappy Felix did, *I'll mind it at a more convenient season*. No, No, Discern it, that the most convenient season is just NOW. O that all unconverted men would consider the Danger the Madness of their Procrastinations. Tis said in Eccles. 9. 12. *Man knoweth not his time*. Man, discern thy time as a flying time, and an uncertain time. A Jewish Rabbi gave that Counsel to a Scholar of his, *Be sure you repent at least a day before you dy*. Truly, tis a fearful thing for a man when he comes to dye, not to be able to say, *Tis at least a day since that I made my peace with God*. Well, who of us can say, that *this day* is not our *last day*? We cannot be sure that we repent a day before we dy, unless we repent this very day. Suppose you were to suffer an horrible Death in case you had not finished some notable Undertaking before night. O how would every stroke of the Clock strike to your very hearts within you! Behold O Sinner, be amazed, stand Astonished, and take the present time to get out of thy present state. Tis possible thou mayst be a dead man before to morrow, tis possible *this night* thy soul may be required. Horrid will thy condition be, if this happen before thy

thy peace be made with GOD. There are Graves in the *Burying-Place* shorter than the youngest of us all. Thou mayst Conclude with saying as *David* to *Jonathan*, *As the Lord lives, there is but a step between me and death.* Wherefore, let me Conclude with saying as *Michal* to *David*, *O save thy self to night, for to morrow thou mayst be slain.* Let no man Repent too late, but let every man Discern the time. Tis the sigh of our GOD over us, O that they understood that they would Consider their Latter

END!



The TRYED CHRISTIAN.

A Discourse delivered, upon *Recovery* from

SICKNESS

JOB. XXIII. 10.

*When He hath Tryed me, I shall
come forth as GOLD.*

T Here was a Man in the Land of Arabia,
whose name was Job; and that man was
perfect and upright. The Church of
GOD is enriched with an excellent *History*, in
an elegant *Poesie*, relating the great *Prosperi-*
y, the sad *Adversity*, and strange *Recovery* of
that perfect, and upright man. 'Tis probable,
that he was an *Edomite*, and the very *Jobab* whom
Esa was Great-Grandfather unto; but this I
am

am sure of, *He was an Israelite indeed!* From a Rich and Fair estate, He suddenly became, *As poor as Job*; and while he was in this poor Condition, his noble Friends gave him their friendly *Visits and Respects*. Many admirable *Dialogues* now passed between them; wherein they endeavoured to Accuse and Convince him of some remarkable Iniquity, as the Cause of his Calamity; and he laboured to vindicate himself; to assert his own Integrity and Sincerity.

In our Context here, the good man is expressing his *Willingness* and *Readiness* to appear before the Judgement-seat of God; and in our Text, he declares what he expects would be the Result of his *Tryals* by the Lord. He comforts himself by those two Considerations. First, that God's *Knowledge* did reach him. He saith, *God knowes the way that is in me*; q. d. Tho I cannot see God, yet God can see me; and the most inward *Purposes* or *Appetites* of my mind, are not concealed from Him. And Next, that God's *Trial* would clear him. This is the Article that lyes before us to be Explained and Improved; and the *Doctrine*, which may guide our Discourse upon it, is,

That Good men come forth as GOLD, under and after the Trials of the Almighty God.

It is by the ensuing Propositions that we may arrive to right thoughts about the Truth before us.

Proposition

Proposition. I.

There is a various Tryal which the God of Heaven causes to pass upon His people. No Christian can be without his Tryals. But there are especially two sorts of Tryals which our God will subject us all unto.

First,

There are the Trials of Divine *Examinations*, Which will be critical upon us. Tis said in Psal. 11. 4. 5. *The Lords eyes behold, and His eyelids try the children of men; the Lord sounds (as the French Translation hath it) both the righteous and the wicked.* Every man in the world falls under the Notice, and so, under the Tryal of the omniscient God. The all-seeing Eyes of God, as it were, *Examine* us, and His Ey-lids knit themselves for a Scrutiny into our Hearts and lives. The blessed God will pass a Judgment, after a Trial upon us; whether we truly love Him and seek Him, or no. We are told in Psal. 7. 9. *The righteous God trieth the Hearts and the Reins; an Assertion, an Expression, it may be, more than seven times repeted in the Word of God!* The *Examination* and *Observation* of God, extends it self to the most interior parts of men; the motions of their very *Hearts* and *Reins* come under His exactest Cognizance. Every man may so far say after that godly man, in Psal. 17. 3. *Lord, thou hast proved my heart, thou hast visited me, thou hast tried me.* To use a

Similitude

Similitude made Legitimate and Canonical by the Apostle himself, in Heb. 4. 13. The *Sacrificing Knife* of old, never did penetrate so far into the Bowels of the Creatures it was imployed upon; it never laid them so *naked and open*, before the standers-by; as the *examining Eye* of God makes a discovery of what is in our Souls and our wayes.

Secondly, There are the Trials of Divine *Dispensations* which we must have Experience of. God's *Providences* are our *Probations*; by them we are *tried* what we are. The things which befall us in the world, fetch out of us, those things which manifest what *metal* we are made of. Particularly, tis said in 2. Cor. 6. 3, 7. We are *Approved* by things on the *Right hand* and on the *Left*.

First, The *Merciful Dispensations* of God, are *Trials* of us: these are Trials on the *Right hand*. It is a sacred Proverb, in Prov. 27. 21. *As the Fining-pot for silver, and the Furnace for Gold, so is a man to his praise; or so the mouth which praises any one, is to try him.* As when a man is praised by his Neighbour, so when a man is *Blessed* of his Maker, he is then *tried* unto the utmost. *Honours* from below, do *Indicare virum*; they soon *Try & show* the man that is *persum'd* therewith; and the same is done by *Mercies* from above. Therein the Lord brings us, as He did the *Souldiers of Gideon*, to a *River of Plenty*, and He saies;

as in *Judg. 7. 4.* Now I will try them there. The Favours of God, as it were, put us into a *Crucible*, in a *Furnace*, where it soon becomes apparent, whether we fear him or no. They are so many Trials, *Whether we will hear God speaking to us in our prosperity ; or whether when we wax fat, we shall kick against the Lord .*

Secondly, The *Afflictive* Dispensations of God, are likewise *Tryals* of us. And these are Trials on the *Left hand*. So much is intimated in *1. Pet. 1. 6, 7.* *Ye are in heaviness thro' many Temptations, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise. All Afflictions are Tentations; by them we are tried whether we have the Grace of God in us or no. Tis Faith, but not Faith alone, which our Troubles here are the Trials of. A Sick-bed is a Furnace, a Reproach is a Furnace, a Loss; or a God is a Furnace, in which tis tried whether we have the spirits, not of Bastards, but of Children in us. Hence we read of A great Tryal of Affliction. Afflicted persons may make that Confession in Ps. 66. 10, 11, Thou, O God, hast proved us, thou hast tried us as silver is tried ; thou hast laid Affliction upon our loins. Hereby we are Try'd whether we will despise the Chastning of the Lord, or whether we will faint when rebuked of Him.*

Proposition I I.

I

Upon

Upon the *Trials* of God, good men come forth as gold.

There is that in *Gold*, which good men may be compar'd unto. We read in *Dent.* 1. 1. about the mountains of *Dizahab*: that is, the *Golden* mountains; because *Gold* was probably dug from thence. The *Churches* of God in the world, are such *Mountains* of gold. Every true Believer is a rich lump of *Gold* before the Lord. Of such persons tis said in *Lam.* 4. 2. They are the precious sons of *Zion*, comparable to fine gold. There are diverse properties in *Gold*, which a good man will have a blessed Resemblance of. I should offer you not *Gold*, but *Hay* and *stubble* if I should read you here a *Lecture* of *Metallurgy*, or discourse to you all that I could Philosophize about this King of *Metals*. Let me only touch on a few common Reflections, As now,

Gold is a pure metal. Hence we read near some scores of times in the sacred Scripture, about pure *Gold*. It will not readily admit a Mixture or an Alloy with more imperfect Metals; unless with *Silver*: Especially the *Dust-gold* of *Guinea*, *Gold* whereof *Job* saith, tis *Dust* of gold: wonderful is the Purity thereof! Thus a good man is a pure man; He is one of those that are called in *Matth.* 5. 8. The pure in heart: He is pure in his Ends, pure in his principles, pure in his practises, pure from the dross of *Lust*: and he is not so much *Nominally* as really, A Puritan.

Again

Again, Gold is a *Ductil* Metal. 'Tis marvel-
lously extensible when beaten into Leaves; twere
incredible to tell how far one Grain of Gold may
be extended and continued. So dense and com-
pacted, and united, are the parts of it, that an
Ounce of it may be beaten (I suppose) into a
Thousand Leaves. Thus a good Man can be
Drawn forth into large Expressions of goodness
and vertue. It was said by such an one in Psal.
11. 3. *My goodness Extendeth.* He extends his
Piety, his Charity, he extends his Influence far
and near; and he is a *Diffusive* good.

Once more, Gold is a *Beautiful* metal. 'Tis
called, *Aurum*, for that very cause; *ab Aurum*,
i. e. a *Splendore*. 'Tis a shining and glitt'ring
thing; and hence things that are very splendid,
are said to be covered with yellow Gold. For
this reason, an *Hook* of it once catch't *Achan* by
the Lust of the Eye. Thus, a good man has a
transcendent *Beauty* in him. To such an one,
was said in Cant. 6. 4. *Thou art Beautiful.*
There is a Lustre on the Face, and a Lustre in
the Walk of such a man; he has even the Splen-
dor of *A light* in the world.

Furthermore, Gold is a *Durable* Metal. Tho^e
the Bible affirms that it is *Corruptible*, and *Can-
kerable*, and *Perishing*, yet there is a mighty
Strength to be ascribed unto it. It will endure
the hottest Fire with small or no Diminution;
and *Aqua-fortis* it self will not eat into it. Such

an *Enduring* thing is a good man. His Character is that in Matth. 24. 13. *He shall endure to the end.* No *Fire*, no *Water*, no *Vexation* shall consume his *Devotion*. He is the *Overcomer*, whom neither the *Flattery* nor the *Fury*, neither the *Frowning* nor the *Fawning* of any *Tempter* can dissolve the *Religion* of.

Moreover, *Gold* is a *Ponderous Metal*. Even *Lead* it self in its weight, is to *Gold* as far short as *Sixty* is of an *Hundred*; if I mistake it not. Such is the *Quality*, such the *Gravity* of a good man. A godly man is a *Weighty* man. Tis said in Prov. 12. 26. *A righteous man is more excellent than his neighbour.* One such man will weigh down multitudes and myriads of other men. His being a *pondering man*, it soon makes him become *ponderous* man. His unconverted Neighbourhood may own of him, *Thou art worth ten thousand of us.*

Finally *Gold* is a *precious Metal*. Its *precious* for the *Use* which tis of in *Nature*. Rich *Cordials* and *Medicines* are to be extracted from it. Its *precious* also for the *Price* which tis of in *Esteem*; the *Auri sacra fames*, the unhallowed *Appetite* which men crave it with, prefers it above all common things. Tis in Scripture-phrase a *precious* thing indeed, of which it might be said, *It is more precious than gold.* But of a good man might such a thing be spoken: it may be said of such a man, as in *Isa. 13. 12.* *The man is*

more precious than fine gold; even than the golden wedge of Ophir; [i. e. Peru, as some with much pretense of Reason do conjecture it.] A gracious man, is a precious man; all Beholders ought to put a value upon him; he is even, precious in the eyes of the Lord.

Thus like to Gold will good men come forth, under and after the Tryals of the Lord; which comprehends these two Conclusions in it.

Conclusion. I.

A good man is found good by the Examinations of God. When God comes to try a good man, He finds the heart of the man to be right before Him. The good man may say with him in 1. Chron. 29. 17. O my God, I know that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness; as for me, in the uprightness of my heart have I offered. Indeed our God uses not an Extremity of Justice and Rigour in our Trial; He would find a world of Iniquity in us, if He did; and He would utterly consume us. The Lord said in Isa. 48. 10. Behold, I have refined thee, but not like silver. No, the Refiner of gold or silver will not allow the least measure of Dross therein. But our merciful God overlooks many grains of Corruption, many grains of Defilement & of Debasement in us; for we all have our Grains. However upon the Trial of a good man, the good God pronounces this of him, This is a dear Son and a pleasant child, I will surely have mercy on him; He pronounces

nounces this, *I find good metal in the soale of the man, and he shall be mine in the day when I make up my Jewels.* The Devil, the Satan, who is the *Accuser of the Brethren*, he may load a good man with Calumnies not a few; that evil spirit will accuse a good man as guilty of *Hypocrisie* in the power of it; but the Holy God brings it unto a *Tryal*, and then He pronounces as in *Job. 2. 3.* *I have tried him; and he is my servant, a perfect and an upright man; One that feareth God and escheweth evil; and still he holdeth fast his integrity.*

Conclusion. II.

A good man is made better by the *Dispensations* of God. It is to him that there is granted the Fulfilment of that promise in *Rom. 8. 28.* *All things shall work together for good.* As for the merciful Dispensations of God, these do encline as well as oblige a good man to all manner of Obedience; they cause him to think, *What shall I render to the Lord?* they cause him to say, *I will fear the Lord and His goodness, I will never sin against so good a God as He.* Thus we are told in *Rom. 2. 4.* *The goodness of God leadeth to repentance.* It even melts and breaks the heart of a good man, so that he cannot find in his heart after such deliverances again to break his commandments. As for the *Afflictive* Dispensations of God, these also cause a good man more than ever to *Abound in the works of the Lord*; they put him upon more *Thinking on his waies*, and upon

turning his feet more unto the testimonies of God. It was said in Psal. 119. 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.* A good man gets this good thereby; his *Wisdom* and his *Vertue* is thereby augmented; and he *Learns Obedience* by the things which he suffers.

USE.

There is a two-fold Exhortation which I must now bespeak your earnest Heed unto.

I. Let us approve our selves as *Gold* under the *Examinations* of the Blessed God. There are who take notice that the Original in Job. 37. 22. is, *Gold cometh out of the North.* God grant that the best *Gold* may here be found in our *North*; that you the inhabitants of the *North* may for your *Vertues* be as *Gold* before the Lord. Yea, that *North-Boston* may be like *Havilah*, and it may be said, *The gold of that land is good;* or, there are Extraordinary golden and precious Christians there.

Tis a Three-fold Counsel which you may therefore be advised with.

Counsil. I.

Beleeve, and *Expect* the Trials of the eternal God.

Beleeve that God now does *Understand* what you are. It was an Article in that famous *Prophets Creed*, in Jer. 12. 3. *Thou, O Lord knowest me, thou hast seen me, and tryed my heart towards*

thee. O that every one of us were enough sensible of that awful solemn Truth! Tis a common thing to say, *God knowes my heart*; but who does enough lay that thing to heart? Who reckons any more upon it than the false *Gehazi* did? It was an Orthodox perswasion in *Psal. 139. 1, 2.* *O Lord thou hast searched me and known me; thou understandest my thought afar off.* Tis very certain, that every one of our thoughts are known to the infinite God, even *afar off*, long enough before they come into our minds. But, O Lord, who has believed our Report? Men and Brethren, do you beleeve it, and apprehend it, and realize it. Beleeve it, that God is all Eye, and that He needs not a *Glass Window* in your breasts for the Exploration of you. Beleeve it, that the eyes of the Lord run to & fro, through the whole earth; and that he will not by a Mistake drop a Blessing wrong as blind *Isaac* did of old. Yea, let it be a frequent Meditation with you, *All that I am, and all that I think, is well known unto the Lord.*

And Expect that God will one day Discover what you are. There is a Day of Discovery that shall shine upon us all; and, Behold the Day comes that shall burn as an Oven, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble in it.

Expect that the great God will have a Snare in this world, for your Detection. Ever now & then there happen some Discriminating Things. That they which are approved might be made manifest.

God

God will have His Times and His Wayes, possibly to *uncase* our hearts before all our Neighbours. It was said of that blessed man in 2. Chron. 32. 31. God left him (in one thing) to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart. You may look for some *Temptation* before you dye, which will make the Inclinations of your souls notorious to the world; especially, If your *Hearts* be not right with God. It is a *Simile* us'd by one of the Ancients, for it; You shall have an *Ape* drest in the *Attire* of a Man, for a while imitating the *Look*, and *shape*, and *Gesture* of a man: but if a *Nutt*, or an *Apple* be thrown before him, he soon shoves what he is. Thou *Hypocrite*, the Lord will have something to throw before thee, which *Object* will decoy thee into a natural suitable Expression of thy self; and as our Lord speaks, in Rev. 2. 23. *All the Churches shall know, that I am He that searcheth the Heart.*

Expect also, that the great God will have a *Bar* for your Detection in another world. 'Tis confessed by all Christians, as in 2. Cor. 5. 10. *We must all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ.* O that we could every one of us now seriously place our selves before the *Judgment seat of God!* Remember, O immortal souls, that you must all very shortly appear before a Judge who hath *Eyes like a flame of fire*; and you must then be exposed in the full view of *Heaven & Earth.*

Remem-

Remember that you shall then have no *Vizard*, no *Disguise* to cover you, but all men and Angels must hear truly what you are. It was the warning in *Ecc. 11. 9.* --- know thou, that God will bring thee to Judgment. Even so Know thou, that thou canst not avoid the day when God shall bring every worke into Judgment, with every secret thing. Know thou, that when the dead, small and great stand before God, then thou shalt stand among em. Know thou, that tho' thou shouldst then shriek, O Rocks, hide me, or O Mountains- defend me, the the Rocks and the Mountains would be deaf unto that lamentable cry. Holy Jerom could say, *Wherever I am, or whatever I do, Methinks I hear the Alarums of the last Trumpet, Arise ye dead & come to Judgment.* O that you would often Reflect upon the Day, when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

Counsil. 2.

Cry mightily to God, that He would give you the *Gold* which will endure all *Tryals* whatsoever. Our Lord saith unto us in *Rev. 3. 18.* *I counsel thee to buy of me Gold tried in the fire.* That *Gold* is *Grace*; let us buy that is, let us beg it of Him. Let us make that our fervent & our frequent Prayer, in *Psal. 119. 80.* *Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I may not be ashamed!* Be careful and prayerful, that you may be *New Creatures* and have the *Root of the matter* in your souls: Be careful and prayerful, That you

may have Oyl in your vessels: Be careful and prayerful, That you may have in you, the well of water which springs up into everlasting life. Let your prayers be restless, till you find that you are indeed Born again, indeed Converted, indeed Sanctified. As for the Grace of God, my son, seek it as silver; for indeed, the Gain of it is better than fine gold.

Counsel, 3.

Often bring your selves to the Tryals of a Self-Examination. 'Tis the Charge of God, in 2. Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves whether you be in the Faith; prove your own selves.* Your souls are as Vessels, then Pierce them to see what they have. Your souls are as Metals, then Touch them to see what they are. Such are the Allusions of the Holy Spirit there. Know thy self, was a golden Rule of Old, and it will make a golden Saint when we make much use of that Rule, Try thy self. We are to use the Word of God as a Glass in which we are to behold our selves; and we are often to compare our selves with what is therein required of us. When we are in a Meditation, as we should every day be upon some Truths of God, we should then examine ourselves, Whether we are moulded according therunto. And when we are under a Visitation, as we sometimes are, by the Rods of God, we should then Examine our selves, as they that of Old said, *Let us now search and try our ways.* Especially when we are approaching to the Table of

of the Lord, *Self-Examination* is not then to be omitted. So hath the Apostle urged, in 1. Cor. 11. 28. *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.* 'Tis a fearful Impiety and Presumption, for a man to sit down at the *Holy Supper* without enquiring, *Have I a Wedding garment on, or no?* Yea tis convenient for a man every Evening, before he sleeps to examine himself and ask, *If I dy this night, is my immortal spirit safe?* O tremble exceedingly least your doom should be that in Jer. 2. 37. *The Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.* Therefore be much in *Examining* yourselves.

Examine Whether you have true **REPENTANCE.**

Wherefore Try whether you are at so much pains for no *Outward* and *Earthly* thing, as you are for the mortification of every lust.

And Try whether *Afflictions* themselves are welcome to you, when you see your sins thereby embittered and subdued.

Examine Whether you have true **FAITH.**

Wherefore Try whether your Souls are extremely affected with the blessed *Fulness & Glory* which is in the Lord Jesus Christ. And Try whether your hearts most affectionately close with the *Gospel-way of Salvation* by Jesus Christ, so as cheerfully to venture the Lives of your souls upon it.

Exa

Examine, Whether you have true LOVE. Wherefore Try, whether any thing that has a Tendency to promote the Honour of God, be readily embraced by you, as a thing more desirable than all the Riches in the world.

And Try whether you count no Service too much to be done for the People of the Saints of the Most High. Put the Question to your selves, and let the Preface of your Answer be that Request in Psal 139. 23. *Search me O God, and try me, and help me to know my self.*

To be much in such Self-Examination is the way to be a Golden Christian, and indeed, none but such an one will have a Value for the Exercise.

I I. Let us also approve ourselves, as gold, under the Dispensations of the Blessed GOD.

Particularly,

First. Let them that are in Prosperity behave themselves well under the Tryals of the Lord. It may be that you are come to have store of Gold; O that you may Be like what you Have! Tis possible that you have been in much Distress and Sorrow: But God has brought you forth, as tis said He brought Israel out of Egypt, in Psal 105. 37. *He brought them forth with Gold.*

Consider, That God is now Trying of your Faithfulness. No doubt, you have sometimes promised the God of Heaven, That if you might have such a measure of Health and Strength, or, That

That if you might have such a Degree of *Estate* and *Honour* you would glorify God with a wonderful Activity. Well, saith our God, *I'll try*. God is trying whether you will be true to those Professions and Engagements, which you made before He so smil'd upon you. God is trying whether you will not Confirm that Observation, in Jer. 17. 9. *The Heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.*

Consider moreover, That God is now trying of your *Thankfulness*. A very terrible Wrath is denounced against them in Deut. 28. 47. *Who serve not God for the abundance of all things.* God gives you an *Abundance of all things*, and it is to try whether you will serve Him, and praise Him for it. God is *Trying* whether you will now often say, *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me!* God is *Trying* whether you will now think, *What shall I render to the LORD for all His benefits?* Let us be as *Gold* by affording now a good Experiment.

Secondly, Let them that are in *Adversity*, likewise behave themselves as under the *Tryals* of the Lord. We may most or all of us, Lament, *I am the man that hath seen Affliction*; there is a Variety of Calamity which we are try'd withal.

God forbid that we should procure to our selves the Brand set upon that wicked man of old, *In the time of low Distress did he trespass yet more against the LORD.* Never was there in this world

world a more doleful sight. than that of a *Theef* on a *Cross*, yet Neglecting and Affronting the Son of God. We that have been lately under Affliction, (particularly, under that Affliction of *Sickness*)- have as it were *lain among the pots* ; God has as it were laid us by among the meanest Lumps of clay ; but O that we may now come forth *Doves*, having *Wings covered with Silver*, and *Feathers with yellow Gold* ! O that we may come forth of our *Tryals* more gracious, more Savoury, more Heavenly, than ever we were in our lives before ; that the *Iron-Age* of Grief may issue in a *Golden-Age* of Grace, unto us ; that our Adversity may procure more *grace* to us, than ever the Prosperity of *Solomon* did gold to him. Tis to be desired, that the *Transmutation of Metals* may be Exemplified in us ; and that the most exquisite *Virriolic* powder may not be so powerful, to make *Natural gold*, as the Dust of Affliction may be to make *Spiritual gold* of our souls. Look to it, Lest our Character be that, *Reprobate Silver*, which is rejected by the Lord.

The First DESIRE.

Let us come forth more out-of-Love with *Gold which perisheth*. Our GOD hath taught us that no *gold* will deliver from Death and Hell ; and that no *gold* can be carried away

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with, us at our Departure hence. Our God hath told us, That though we should have never so much *gold* about us, we may in a moment be taken away from all. Wherefore Let us become Indifferent unto *gold*, and all the Delights of this miserable World. Look, Look upon thy most *golden* Comforts, and imagine thou hearest that Voice of GOD, in Prov. 23. 5. *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?* When one of the Martyrs had money proffer'd unto him, he Refused it, saying, *The Coyn is not current, in the Countrey to which I am going.* O despise all *gold* but what will be Current there.

The Second Desire.

Let us come forth more Admiring of, more Affected with such things as are better than *gold*. The Fear of God is one of those things, Whereof tis said it Job, 28. 16. *It cannot be valued with the Gold of Ophir.* Let it be then our prime and cheef Study; to be daily acting of it; yea, Since we have lately seen *Time* loudly calling on us to Redeem it, Let a Respect to God now ennoble all the Actions of our Lives. The Word of God is another of those things, Whereof tis said, in Psal. 119. 10. *It is more to be desired than much fine Gold.*

Let us then set an unspeakable Value thereupon; Yea, since we have lately seen an

End of all Perfection elsewhere; Let the Bible of God be now more than ever the Companion of your Solitary Hours.

Finally, The SON of GOD, is the Pearl of great price, which no Gold is to be equaliz'd unto. We read of a *Brazen Serpent* [or more truly a *Coper-Serpent*] marvellously useful to Israel of old, O let us now Esteem the Antitype of that *Brasen* or *Coper* Shadow, before the Richest Gold. The holy God has newly sent me back from the Sides of Eternity to tell you, That One *CHRIST* is worth ten Worlds. Tis a thing whereof you have been heretofore advised with frequent, solemn, lively Warnings, from the Eternal God: As *Joshua* could say, in *Cap. 24. 27.* Behold, this stone shall be a Witness, for it hath heard all the words of the Lord. So may I say, Let this Pulpit, and these Walls and Seats and Pillars Remember, if you have forgotten, That you have been often told, All the gold in the world is not worth one Christ. And behold, I repeat unto you one Warning more. Let this House be a Witness, and be you witnesses of it O ye Angels that are invisible here; That it has been earnestly affirmed in our Hearing, A Christ is better than a Thousand Worlds, and they that slight Him, will be miserable for infinitely more than ten Thousand Ages.



LIFE DESIRED.

Upon the Death of a Relation.

Pfal. CXIX. 175.

*Let my Soul live, and it shall praise thee, and let
thy Judgements help me.*

S Weeter Words than these could not come from the *Sweet Singer of Israel* himself. The Hundred and Nineteenth, is the longest, and yet, if the Comparison be not odious, the sweetest, of all the Psalms; and perhaps the Psalm, like the Grace wherewith it was Composed, has a growing Sweetness, towards the Conclusion of it. The one and twentieth *Octonary* in this excellent Psalm, is a Bundle of *Heavenly Affections*; this two and twentieth *Octonary* is an Heap of *Holy Petitions*. There are especially Six Petitions in this last part of the Psalm. The fourth and fifth of them are in the words

words now before us. He begs, First, for his *Life*, then for God's *Help*. The *Life* petition'd for, may be understood as Two-fold: it is call'd, *The life of the Soul*; both *Natural* Life, and *Spiritual* Life may be intended in that Expression. But chiefly the former. *Let my soul live*; it is q. d. *Let my Self live*. Tis an usual Hebraism. In that signification it was the Choice of *Sampson*; *Let me dy*, in the Hebrew it is, *Let my Soul dy with the Philistines*. The *Help* petition'd for, has Two Things declared concerning it. We have the *For-What* of this *Help*; this is, That he might attend the Business for which he desired to live; namely, *To praise God*. And we also have the *From-Whence*, of this *Help*; this is, *From the Judgments of God*. *Thy Judgments*, this is one of the Ten various Phrases used here, to signify, the *Ways* and *Means* whereby God reveals Himself unto the world.

In short, the *Dollrine* before us, is, That *While we pray to live, we should account the Praises of God to be the Cheef End of our Life, in which the Judgments of God are to be sought and used as our Help*.

The Propositions which may shape this Truth unto our minds are these.

Prop. I.

The Praise of God is to be accounted the cheef end of our Life on Earth. If our Souls do live in our Duties, if we enjoy that Life which is an Union

between Soul and Body, this is to be the *End* of it; *That we may praise the God of our lives.* It was the pious Expectation of the Psalmist, in Psal. 118. 17. *I shal not dy but live, and declare the works of the Lord.* This is to be the Resurrection of every man. Can we say, *I do not dy but live?* We should add, *I will then declare the Praises of the Lord.* The first Question that the Thoughts of men should be employed upon is, *What is the Cheef End of Man?* The true and Just answer To that Question is, *The Cheef End of man is to glorifie God.* Well, put the Question so, *What is the Cheef End of Life?* The Answer to that Question too will be the same; *It is to glorifie God.*

To praise God, What is that? To praise God, is to Render and Procure, a due Acknowledment of His Excellencies. Indeed, all the Duties of Religion are Contained in this Comprehensive thing. When we own, when we serve, when we Adore the Great God in any or all the waies of His Worship, Then we praise Him; and we further praise Him, when we provoke others to join with us in doing so. This, This Praise of the LORD is the *End* of our *Life* in the World.

This is the *End* of our *Being.* We are told that *We have our Being in God.* Of all things whatever this is then most Reasonable, that *We should have our Being for God; and our Being*

Being for Him, is not expressed without our praising of Him. The blessed God looks from on high upon mankind, and saith, as in Isa. 43. 21. *This people have I formed for my self, they should show forth my Praise.* Now that which is the End of our Being, is the End of our Living too. Two things are to be affirmed of it,

First, The Law of God doth Appoint this as as the End of our Lives. Unto every man living, this is the Voice of God, *I spare thy life, that so thou mayst live my praise.* It is said in Rom. 14. 7. *If we live, we are to live unto the Lord.* What the Apostle saith of Eating and Drinking, may much more be said of Living; as in 1. Cor. 10. 30. *It must be unto the Glory of God.* God gives our Lives, God keeps our Lives, and this is His reveled, His Preceptive Will concerning our Lives; *Man, I suffer thy life, yea, I support thy life, that I may be praised, loved, admired by thee as long as thou livest.* It was an heavy dismal Charge against *Belshazzar*, in Dan. 5. 23. *God in whose Hand thy breath is, thou hast not glorified.* The Almighty God gives us notice of this, *Thy Breath is in my hand;* at the same time He also requires this of us, *Let thy life be to my praise.* That man makes a sacrilegious Inroachment and Invasion upon God's Right, who makes not God's Praise, the End of his living upon God's Earth.

There is therefore, *Secondly* this to be added thereunto.

The Heart of man should Embrace this as the End of our lives. It becomes every man to say, *I live that God who is worthy to be praised, may have the praises of my Obedience to Him.* It was the godly purpose of the Psalmist, in Psal. 147. 2. *While I live I will praise the Lord.* And a kin to this is the Right Thought, which every man should entertain, *I do live, that I may praise the Lord.* Hence this is one of the principal Pleas which the Saints have used in their Supplications for their Lives. Good Hezekiah pray'd in his Distress, *Lord, let me live.* And what was his Argument? It was that in Isa. 38. 17. 18. *The Grave cannot praise thee; the living, the living, he shall praise thee.* The heart of man should readily close with such an End for the life of man. Satan saies, *Thou livest only to Enjoy the delights of the Flesh in the world; thou livest only to seek, to get, and to taste the secular pleasures provided for thee.* The Soul of man should rise with unspeakable Indignation at this wild proposal. On the other side, our God saies, *The Business of thy life is to magnifie Me, to make my Praise glorious.* Here now, Here the Soul of every man should fall in, and Reply, *This is all my Salvation, and all my Desire.*

But this leads to

Prop. II.

Prayers for life are then, and only then rightly qualified

qualified, when they have Respect unto the Praises of God.

To clear this matter, there are these things to be conceived.

One Conclusion is, That the *Living* on Earth have many *peculiar Opportunities* to be *Praising* of God. Indeed, *Blessed* are the *dead* who *dy* in the Lord, for they too are *alwaies* *praising* of Him. But yet they *rest* from some *Praises*, when they *rest* from their *Labours* here. The departed Saints are continually shouting, *Hallelujah, Hallelujah*, before the Throne of God. The Saints, they are *joyful* in *glory*; and the *High Praises* of God are perpetually *Proceeding* from those *blessed Souls*. But Christians in this world have their *peculiar Opportunities*, to be *Glorifying* of Him that made them. This did the *Psalmist* speak in Ps. 88. 11. *Shall the dead praise thee?* To instance in some particulars:

The *Living* here may be *praising* of God by the Discharge of many *Relations*, which the *dead* Saints are strangers unto. We may now praise God as *Parents*, as *Masters*, as *Officers* in the Church or Common-Wealth. All those *Capacities* will *dy* with us, when we shall go hence and be no more.

Again, The *Living* here may be *Praising* of God, by Bearing many a *Witness* to the *Truths* and *Wares* of the Lord Jesus Christ. We may now bestow many *Rebukes* upon the *Errors* and

the *Evils* of a sinful World. We may part with and *esteem*, an *Estate*, with our *Ease*, and our *Life* it self, out of Respect unto the Name of God. But our *Testimonies* expire with our Lives.

Once more, The *Living* may be *Praising* of God by Advancing His *Kingdom* here below. In this Life we may be instrumental to Convince and Convert *Unregenerate* Sinners, to build up the *Church* of the Lord Jesus, and to Do good among the ignorant by an *Exemplary Conversation*. But this is to be done only below the stars.

Furthermore, There are *Graces* proper to this Life which God is *praised* by the Exercising of. The Tears of Sorrow for Sin will be dry'd up, when we come to the State in which all Sorrow shall flee away. *Charity* in Giving and Forgiving to them that need it, -- there is no occasion for that Charity among them that are *above*; they are all perfect and happy there. *Patience* under Tryals belongs to our present Condition only; there are no *Afflictions* to trouble us, when our *few dayes* full of trouble are passed away. In a Word. Our *Spiritual Warfare* is to be attended only in this *Valley of the Shadow of Death*. We cannot *fight the Battles of the Lord*, and therein we cannot *shew the praises of the Lord*, when we are arrived at the *End of our Faith the Salvation of our Souls*. Our *Fight* is done, our *Crown* is come when we have been Faithful to the Death.

A Second

A Second Conclusion is, That *Opportunities* for the *Praising* of God are the things for which we should desire to be *living* on Earth. There is a Three-fold *Desire of Life* which the Living have. There is a *Natural* Desire of Life. This is common both to *good* men and *bad* men. *Nature* it self startles at the Approach of *Death*; Innocent *Nature* shivers and recoyls, when this *King of Terrors* is ready to lay his cold Icy hand upon us. This was *Joab's* Desire: that valiant Souldier, The *Lord-General* of *Israel* himself, in 1. King. 2. 28. being in cold blood under Apprehensions of *Death*, fled unto the Horns of the *Altar*, as a Sanctuary to save his *Life*. There is also a *Sensual* Desire of Life. This is that which *Bad* men are under the power of. Many are loth to dye because they would not leave the *Pleasures* and *Profits* and *Honours* which did surround them here. They are like the Miser who on his *Death-Bed*, hugg'd his Baggs of Gold, and cry'd out, *Must I leave you? Must I leave you?* Their Love of their *Life*, comes from their love of their *Flesh*. This was the *Rich Fools* Desire, in *Luc. 12. 20.* He wished for many *Tears*, that he might eat and drink, and be merry here.

There is likewise a *gracious* Desire of Life. And this is that which *good* men are affected with: They desire to *live*, because they desire to *praise*. They would live, because they would honour God

God in those matters & those manners for which their Lives do afford them blessed *Opportunities* and *Advantages*. Now this *gracious Desire* of of Life is a *Regular Desire*. A *Desire* of Life for the *Praise* of God, is the only *Desire* of Life, that will have praise of God. This was *David's Desire* when he was visited with *Sickness*, when he was *weak*, and his *Bones* were *pained*, then said he in *Psal. 6. 5.* *O save me, for in Death there is no Remembrance of thee, in the Grave who shall give thee thanks?* Such *Desires* are the only *right* and *chast* *Desires*. It is not fit for a *Christian* to say, *I desire to live, because I am afraid to dy.* Much less is it fit for him to say, *I desire my life in the world, that I may turn and wind still the Affairs of the World.* But This is that which *Legitimizes* the *Desire* of Life: As every thing is to be *improved* for God, so every thing should be *desired* for God. And thus *Life* it self. We are daily *Praying*, as he in *Psal. 102. 24.* *O my God, take me not away in the midst of my dayes.* Well, Our God enquires of us, *Why art thou unwilling to be taken away in the midst of thy dayes?* We should have this to be our true *Account* of it, *Because, O Lord, I am loth to be taken away in the midst of my Praise.*

Prop. III.

The Judgments of God are to be sought and used by us as our Help in those Praises of God which are the End of our life.

There

There are blessed *Helps*, which God hath provided for us, by which we may be both *Assisted* in and *Excited to*, the work of our lives.

Behold a *double Help*, both implied in the *Judgments* of God. And he that shall consult other passages in this Hundred-and-nineteenth Psalm, will find both under this Notion insisted on. The *Scriptures* of Truth, and the *Troubles* of Life.

First, The *Word* of God is to be sought as the *Help*, of our *Praising* Him. The Prophet of old could say as in *Micah* 6. 8. *The Lord hath shewed thee, O man, the thing that good is.* Thus, the Lord hath shewed us how to be praising of Him, by living to Him. But Where has he shewed it? Truly in the sacred *Bible*. The Bible is the *Directory* given to us. Every Child is well taught to say, *The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Rule which God hath given to instruct us how we are to glorify Him.* To order a *Life* in a dark world, is as hard as to manage a *Ship* in a dark night, we are in the *Dark* about the *Perils* which our lives are to be employed in. What shall we then do that we may leave no part of our due Homage to God unperformed? The Apostle speaks fully to this Case in 2. Pet. 1. 18. *We have a sure word of Prophecy, whereto ye do well to take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place.* There, There it is: our Bible is our *Pole-Star*: keep an eye to That and we shall *shape*

shape a course Right. All the *Directions*, all the *Promises*, all the *Threatnings* of God, will be so many Helps, of our Obedience. If any man ask, *How do the Scriptures of God help men in the Praises of God?* Know, The Scriptures themselves give an Answer thereunto, in Psal. 119. 7, 8. *The law of the Lord converts the soul, the testimonies of the Lord make wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord rejoice the heart; the commandments of the Lord enlighten the eyes.* That *Conversion*, that *Instruction*, that *Joy* and that *Light* which the *Word of God* affords unto us, will be no little Help in the *Praise of God*.

Secondly, The *Rod of God* is to be used as the Help of our Praising Him. The Lord sends many *Afflictions* upon us. An *Heman*, is afflicted in his mind: a *Job* is Afflicted in his Estate; a *Gains* is afflicted in his Body, a *Paul* in his Credit, and a *David* in his Children, they live ill and they dy worse before him. What is the Use we are now to make of these things? Truly our *Afflictions* are to be the Help of our *Devotions*. It is the Call of God in *Mic. 6. 9.* *Hear the Rod.* As we should hear the *Voice* of the Rod, so we should use the *Help* of the Rod. By our *Afflictions* we should be helped unto more *Seriousness*, more *Watchfulness*, more *Fruitfulness*. Now those things are to the *Praise* of the glory of the grace of God. Our *Afflictions* are the *purgings* & the *prunings* bestow'd by our God upon

upon us. What are they for? but, *That we may bring forth more Fruit*: and we are told in *Joh. 15. 8. Herein is my father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit. Observe it: a Learning the Statutes of God, is a Rendring of Praises to God; those two things are one.* Now see what the Psalmist saith, in *Psal. 119. 97. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn thy Statutes.* This then is incumbent on us under every Affliction; Our study should be, *What Advantage, what Engagement to be more holy, is now put into my hands!* Every Afflicted man should ask, *How may the Sorrowes of my life promote the praises of my God?*

But for the Use of these things.

USE. I.

Some *Evil Desires* are hence Rebuked and Condemned. Especially two sorts of Desires.

First, *Impatient Desires of Death*, are to be Reproved.

Something is to be said by way of *Concession*; and something by way of *Correction* about such Desires.

First by way of *Concession*, I would say; There are some Desires of Death well-becoming a Child of God. Such were the Desires of *Paul*, in *Phil. 1. 22. I desire to be dissolved and be with Christ.* When we think of the day, in which we shall go to the the Spirits of just men made perfect; and to *Jesus the Mediator of the New-Covenant*; When we think

think of the day in which the Lord will deliver us from the hand of all our enemies, and from the hand of SIN; O the thoughts of it should fill our Souls with Raptures of Joy! they should cause our hearts to leap and spring within us. It is an allowable thing to be almost angry with Time, to call upon flow Time, and say, Fly apace, Fly away, O Time; Come, O Eternity, come and fetch me into the presence of the Lord. The Visions of the Lord Jesus may cause us to say humbly with aged, faithful Simeon, Lord, let thy servant depart in peace. The Chariots of Death, sent by the Lord Jesus to fetch us unto Himself should be as welcom to us, as the Waggon of Joseph were to Jacob of old. It should cause us to Rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, when we think of the unspeakable joy and the full glory which we are going unto. There are holy longings and lookings of Soul, with which we may cry out, Why, why are His Chariots so long in coming? Why tarry the Wheels thereof?

But yet,

Secondly, By way of Correction.

If these Desires are with Impatience, much more if they are thro' Impatience, they become sinful before the Lord. The embittered spirits of Christians, have been sometimes too prone unto such Desires. It was an inordinate passion in Moses, when a froward people under his charge provoked him to say, in Numb. 17. 14. Kill me

Me, I pray thee out of hand. Had God granted his Desire, he had lost Thirty years of eminent Service in the World. It was an irregular passion in *Elias*, when the persecutions of wicked men so tired him, as to make him say, in 1. King. 19. 4 *O Lord, take away my life.* It hath been an Observation, that *Many good and great men sit under Elias's Juniper tree.* As culpable was the Passion of *Jonah*, when the Withering of a Guord had that Effect upon him in Cap. 4. 8. *He wished to dy.* The like pang of Impatience, did that Pattern of Patience, *Job*, fall into; he spake as if he could hardly forbear laying violent hands upon himself. Even so far do the distempered, unbridled Wishes of many run. Their Desire of Death is a sort of *Revenge* on God; they would as it were deprive God of the glory which He might have of them. Compose these desires, O ye raging Souls; compose these Desires. Allay this *Fever*, this phrensy. Its not only an *irreligious* but an *unnatural* passion which you are carried away withal. You desire to *dye*; Well, are you sure that the *Death* which you desire now, will not prove a *Death* which you shall Deplore throughout eternal Ages. It is said of the Believer in Psal. 91. 19. *With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my Salvation.* It is a very disordered heart that will be dissatisfied with so great a mercy.

Secondly, *Unsanctified Desires of Life are to be*

be Reproved also. Of these Desires there are Three Sorts to be Reprehended.

There are, first. *Carnal Desires of Life to be blamed.* Some desire to *live*, and wherefore is it? It is because they desire to *eat* and *drink* and be merry. They can't part with such *Relations* and *Possessions* as are here to be enjoyed. The *Comforts* of Life are the things that cause their *Desires* of Life. One once beholding his fine Accommodations made this Reflection thereupon, *Hec faciant invitos mori*; these are the things that make us *unwilling to dy*. Unmortified Corruptions are the causes of these desires. Remember what the Lord hath said in Matth. 10. 37. *He that loveth Father or Mother, or Son or DAUGHTER more than me, is not worthy of me.* Thus may the Lord well say to the Subject of these Desires, *If you had rather be with your friends on earth, than with your Father in Heaven, you are not worthy to be with me at all.* And this by the way is to be said of them that desire the life of their *Friends* as well as of themselves. It is for the Interest of the Lord Jesus Christ that the dead *Children* which you lament, are dead; or else they had not dyed at all. Now saith the Lord Jesus, *If thou lovest those CHILDREN, those Relations more than me, and hadst rather have them with thy self, to my Prejudice, than to have them with me, to thy own Bereavement, thou art not worthy to have them with me at all.*

Secondly

Secondly. There are *Careful Desires* of Life to be likewise blamed. Many desire to *live* only upon this account, *Some Child, or some Charge they are concerned for.* They have this or that *Child* which they cannot believe will be well provided for, when they are *dead*; or they suspect what will become of such or such a *Charge*. There is indeed a *Desire of Life* on such a Score, which is not alwaies very severely to be found fault withal. But oftentimes there is too much *Distrust* in such a *desire*. Why cannot we venture our Families and the Concernments thereof, in the Hands of the faithful God? The Lord has said in Jer. 49. 11. *Leave thy fatherless Children, I will preserve them alive.* And he still saies, *I will be a better Father, and a better Friend unto them, than thou thy self canst be.*

Thirdly. There are *Fearful Desires* of Life which are blame-worthy too. When Death comes with that message, *Set thy Soul in order, for thou shalt dy and not live,* many persons are so terrified as to be even at their wits ends. O how they groan. *I cannot dy.* Indeed Sinners that have not been *born twice*, may well tremble to *dy once*; no body can blame them; there is a *Second Death*, ready to sieze upon the forlorn souls that are not Regenerate. But such as have been truly turn'd to God in Christ, should not entertain Death with such Reluctancies. Can you not uprightly say, That if you were sure to be freed from

from *Sin*, you could be content to be struck by Death? O then, be cheerfully willing to Dy. Thy soul will no sooner pass into Eternity but it shall experience that thing in *Rom. 6. 7.* *He that is dead is freed from Sin.* It is often pretended by men, *I would live because, I would be more holy before I dy.* Tis well; but there is not seldom a Deceit in the Pretence; often something else is in the Bottom; *A Rebellion against the Will of God.* Wouldst thou really and earnestly be holy? Be willing then to dy as well as to live. Death is the way to Holiness in the Perfection of it. In short: Good was the Temper of that sick person who being asked, *Which do you desire, to live, or to dy?* answered, *I refer it to God;* and when it was again said, *But suppose God should refer it to you?* reply'd, *I would then refer it to him again.*

USE. II.

Let us all be now *Exhorted*, that the *Praise* of God, may be duly accounted by us, as the *End* of our Life, in our Prayers for it. Let us not shoot beside our *Mark*, or live beside our *End*. Let us pray that we may live, and let us live that we may praise. It is the most lamentable plight in the world, that a man should spend his Life in *Sinning* against God, rather than in *Praising* of Him. But alas, This is the case of *Multi- tudes*, *Multi- tudes* among us. How few of us [Consider of it seriously] How few of you that
are

are now before the Lord, ever seriously thought with your selves, *What is the Errand that I am come into the world upon?* Hast thou not lived above a Score of years in the world, and never yet seriously thought, *What is it that God sent me hither for?* Every man here, I suppose, desires to live; let your Prayers express those Desires; and say after the Psalmist, Ps. 32. 8. *My Prayer is to the God of my life.* But more than so, Let those Desires be for the sake of your Praises; and say after the Psalmist again, in Ps. 119. 17. *Deal bountifully with thy Servant that I may live and keep thy Word.*

Three things are you to be advised unto; yea Four things are to be importunately prest upon you.

First, Mark and Prize your Opportunities to be Praising of God. Every man has his Opportunities. Some have an Instrument of a Thousand Strings; but the meanest of us all has an Instrument of Ten strings, for our God to be praised with. Let every man often enquire, *What are my Opportunities to glorify God?* And let every man alwaies conclude, *My Opportunities are my Treasures.*

Secondly. Let the Word of God Direct you in His Praises. Be often Consulting of that: *Peace will be on all, and Praise will be from all, that walk according to this Rule.* A Bible,-- Christians, let That be your Counsellour on all Occasions.

The Psalmist could say in Ps. 119. 164. *Seven times a day will I praise thee O Lord; because of thy Righteous Judgements.*

Thirdly. Let the Rod of God provoke you to His Praises. If you cannot Bless God for your Afflictions, which yet, I think, is a thing attainable; nevertheless, I'm sure you should praise God in your Afflictions. Let God gain some Glory, and we shall gain some Good, by all our Sufferings. Take the counsel in Isa. 34. 15. *Glorifie the Lord in the Fires.*

To Enforce these Three Things;

Consider that Thing which is intimated in the Text. The Lives of your Souls are enwrapped in the praises of God. Saies the Psalmist, *Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee.* So I may say, *Let thy Soul praise, and it shall live.* A praising Soul, is a Thriving Soul. In this consisteth Life Eternal it self. The Life of thy Soul in the Third Heaven, will be the praise of thy God for evermore. Praise God for thy Life; it is a mercy well worth praise. Praise God by thy life; so thou wilt begin Heaven upon Earth.

But there is a Fourth Counsil which more immediately concerns that part of the Congregation which are of my own Age, and have therefore a more peculiar interest in my Loves and Cares.

'Tis to Young People here, that I take leave to say,

Fourthly, *Begin now Besimes to live unto the*

the Praise of the everliving God. My Brethren you have not yet begun to live at all, if you have not begun to praise the Lord. You are Dead in Trespasses and Sins; you are stark dead in the rotten, hideous, loathsome Graves of your Unregeneracy, if you have not yet begun to order your Conversation aright, and to ponder, *How may I so offer praise as to Glorify God?* But is not this the deplorable Condition of many, many Young people here? Conscience, do thine Office! Is not the Hour yet to come, is not the Day yet to dawn, when that young person (whom thou art the Officer of God unto) did by an hearty Covenant bind himselfe unto the Serving and the Praising of the Lord?

But what mean you, O ye inconsiderate Youths, to delay the Remembring of your Creator so? In the Language of the young Prophet, whom God sent unto the Jews of old, let me say, *Thus saith the Lord, Consider your waies.*

Consider the Uncertainty of your Life which you have to be prailing of God withal. As young as you are, you may dy before the most aged person here. It hath been truly noted, That *The old man has Death before his face, but the young man has Death behind his back.* The stroak of Death may sooner lay you in the Dust, than some whose Heads old Time hath snow'd upon. O look, and see, and let thy heart shake at the Apprehension of it: Thy Death stands, just behind thee

This shot repeats the previous one, but with different lighting.

The Psalmist could say in Ps. 119. 164. *Seven times a day will I praise thee O Lord; because of thy Righteous Judgements.*

Thirdly. Let the *Rod* of God *provoke* you to His *Praises*. If you cannot *Bless* God for your Afflictions, which yet, I think, is a thing attainable; nevertheless, I'm sure you should *praise* God in your Afflictions. Let God gain some *Glory*, and we shall gain some *Good*, by all our Sufferings. Take the counsel in *Isa.* 34. 15. *Glorifie the Lord in the Fires.*

To Enforce these *Three Things*;

Consider that Thing which is intimated in the Text. The *Lives* of your *Souls* are enwrapped in the praises of God. Saies the Psalmist, *Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee.* So I may say, *Let thy Soul praise, and it shall live.* A praising Soul, is a *Thriving* Soul. In this consisteth *Life Eternal* it self, The *Life* of thy Soul in the Third Heaven, will be the *praise* of thy God for evermore. Praise God for thy *Life*; it is a mercy well worth praise. Praise God by thy life; so thou wilt begin *Heaven upon Earth.*

But there is a *Fourth* Counsel which more immediately concerns that part of the Congregation which are of my own *Age*, and have therefore a more peculiar interest in my *Loves* and *Cares*.

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thee, there with an Horrible Pole-Ax ready lifted up, saying as the Prince of old, *Shall I smite them? Shall I smite them?* If the great God utter the word, *Smite, smite*, thou art gone beyond all Recovery. The Blessed God hath newly caused me to look into the *Coffins* of two very near and sweet Relations, neither of which had ever seen *Twenty Winters* in the World; and with a strong hand He then said unto me, *Go, Go tell the young people of Boston, and Charlestown, that this is that which they are all expos'd unto. Behold I am now come in Bitterness and in the heat of my spirit, I am come to Warn you of it, That You may dy before you are aware of such a dismal Change at hand. O do not procrastinate the praises and the Vertues which the God of Heaven Expects from you; put not off until, Tomorrow; For tis the admonition to be now set before you, in Prov. 2. 7. Boast not thy self of Tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*

But Consider also, the Dreadfulness, of a Death, ensuing upon a Life not spent in the praising of God. O this Dying! tis a solemn thing, tis, *A thing by it self*: What followes it? But that in Heb. 9. 27. *After Death Judgement.* That Judgment will be *Eternal*; and if it come upon thee before thy turning and living unto God, it will be very Terrible.

Hearken to this awful Truth and Voice of the Almighty

Almighty God, and let thy heart quiver as one of the loudest claps of Thunder at it ; If thou die before thy peace be made with God, and thy praise be given to Him, tis impossible thou shouldst escape the Vengeance of Eternal Fire ; Small Chips as well as great Logs are horribly burning there, there must thou too undergo most exquisite Anguishes, for infinitely more than as many Millions of Ages, as the Huge Ocean has Drops of Water in it.

O Consider, these *Terrors* of the Lord, and immediately set upon His *Praises*.

Now that you would come to these *Resolutions*, before you go from the present Exercise ! *Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn from following after you ;* but give me leave to press upon you at least this *one* Consideration more.

Consider seriously, How exceeding *Acceptable* it will be to the great God, for such *Young* persons as you, to set upon praising of Him ! Your *Praises*, they are very much desired by the Lord, and not a little delightful to Him. He declares *My soul desires the first ripe Fruit ;* and He seem'd to express as it were some *Hast*, for the *First Fruits* under the Law of Old. The Lord in a sort longs to see you serving of Him with the *First Fruits* of your *Age*, and of your *Praise*. He saies as in *Cant. 2. 14.* *Let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice.* The *Voice* of your *Praise* makes a matchless melody in the ears of the Lord

and he call'd for them. The very Chatterings of our infants are pleasant unto us; the Praises and the Devotions of young persons are so unto Our Father which is in Heaven; and he asketh for them with ungainfayable Importunities. It was said unto a young man in 1. Chron. 28.

If thou seek the Lord, He will be found of thee. Even so. If thou (that art a young person) praise the Lord he will be pleased with thee. One that owns an Orchard full of many fruitful Trees, will take a most particular and affectionate Notice of a young Tree beginning to have some little Fruit upon it: Our Father is such an Husband man. Young Johns, are they that prove the Disciples whom Jesus loves. Young Josabbs will have special Comforts in this, and special Honours in another world. And, yee Hearts of Adamant, are you not yet overcome to resolve, I will now praise and serve the great God? O let not your Answer be, I am almost persuaded; but become Altogether so. As twas said of him, Behold he prays! thus let it be said of you, Behold he praises! How, How can you be deaf Adders before the Charms of these Considerations?

Lord visit the hitherto-unperswaded young people

here; O make it the Day of thy power

with them; and keep these things

in the Imagination of the

thoughts of their hearts

for Evermore.

FINIS.

